



## HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DAN SIEGEL

**WHEREAS,** Dan Siegel, a local progressive icon and pathbreaking civil rights lawyer who fought for workers, unions, and human rights advocates over five decades of civil practice, died on July 2nd, 2025, in Oakland at the age of 79; and

**WHEREAS,** born in the Bronx, Dan Siegel's life was shaped by his upbringing in a Long Island Jewish family, his commitment to the civil rights struggle, his marriage to fellow attorney and activist Anne Weills, and his family, including two sons and three grandchildren; and

**WHEREAS,** after graduating from Hamilton College in 1967 with a degree in religious studies, he moved to Berkeley to attend law school. He was inspired to become an attorney after being arrested in Mississippi while working with the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) to register voters. He always remembered that it was a National Lawyers Guild attorney who got him out of jail; and

**WHEREAS,** Dan met Anne in Berkeley in 1968. Both played key roles in local movements to oppose the Vietnam War, support the civil rights movement, and oppose imperialism and fascism. In 1969, Dan was elected as the president of UC Berkeley's student body, which would soon bring him into direct conflict with the state of California and Gov. Ronald Reagan; and

**WHEREAS,** after community members beautified a derelict UC-owned lot near campus into a "People's Park," UC fenced off the site. On what would come to be known as "Bloody Thursday," Dan urged thousands gathered in protest at Cal's Sproul Plaza "to go down there and take the park." As the crowd spontaneously headed down Telegraph Avenue, it was met by law enforcement officers firing shotguns and tear gas canisters, seriously injuring dozens and killing a bystander. That night, Reagan sent National Guard troops to enforce a curfew and ban on public assembly; and

**WHEREAS,** the state bar association would ultimately use these events as a basis for denying him the right to practice law; it would take a historic California Supreme Court ruling in Siegel v. Committee of Bar Examiners to affirm that participation in protest movements is not a sign of deficient "moral character." After winning the right to practice law, Dan went on to earn legal victories on behalf of thousands of plaintiffs seeking protection for their civil, labor and First Amendment rights; and

**WHEREAS,** Dan represented workers who built pipelines in Alaska, canned food in Watsonville, and repaired naval ships in San Diego. He represented "Occupy the Farm" protesters who camped on state land

during the Occupy movement, and he represented pro-Palestine activists who stopped Bay Bridge traffic to raise attention to the war on Gaza. Much of his work was pro bono, whether for unhoused people, students, prisoners, enlisted military personnel or low-income workers; and

**WHEREAS,** as chief of complex litigation for the San Francisco City Attorney, Dan led the settlement of an employment discrimination case against the city's fire department, resulting in a consent decree that guaranteed affirmative action in hiring and promotions for women and people of color. Dan and Anne together represented numerous university professors in discrimination and workplace retaliation suits. In 2007, Dan won the two largest verdicts ever awarded in cases brought under Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, which forbids sex discrimination and requires gender equity in higher education; and

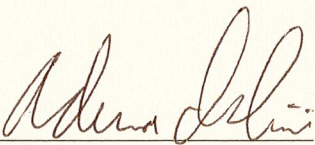
**WHEREAS,** Dan was elected to two terms on the Oakland School Board, serving as president. He served as chair of the Oakland Housing Authority, co-wrote Oakland's community policing law, and taught graduate courses at Mills College. In 2014, Dan and Anne were honored by the San Francisco chapter of the National Lawyers Guild as "Champions of Justice," and cited as "a big reason why social movements are so strong in the Bay Area;" and

**WHEREAS,** Dan's final public appearance was a speech at the Oakland "No Kings" rally on June 14th, 2025, when he exhorted the crowd filling Oscar Grant Plaza to oppose Donald Trump and the white supremacist movements backing his presidency; and

**WHEREAS,** Dan and Anne were married in Oakland on August 1st, 1975. Records obtained pursuant to the Federal Open Information Act show an FBI informant attended their small wedding and reported on their union. They raised their son Michael Siegel in their east Oakland home of 48 years; and

**WHEREAS,** Dan is survived by Anne, Michael, stepson Christopher Scheer, grandchildren Ben, Malika, and Hamza, brothers David, Jonathan, and Jesse, and many loving family members and friends.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Adena Ishii,** Mayor of the City of Berkeley, do hereby honor Dan Siegel for his lifelong dedication to peace, justice, and progressive values and express our sincere gratitude, appreciation, and condolences on behalf of the countless people, both within the City of Berkeley and beyond, who live in a better, more just world as a result of his life and legacy of service and organizing.

  
Adena Ishii  
Mayor



September 30, 2025