

# VALLEY LAWYER

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## Legal Governance: Four Valley Lawyer Legislators

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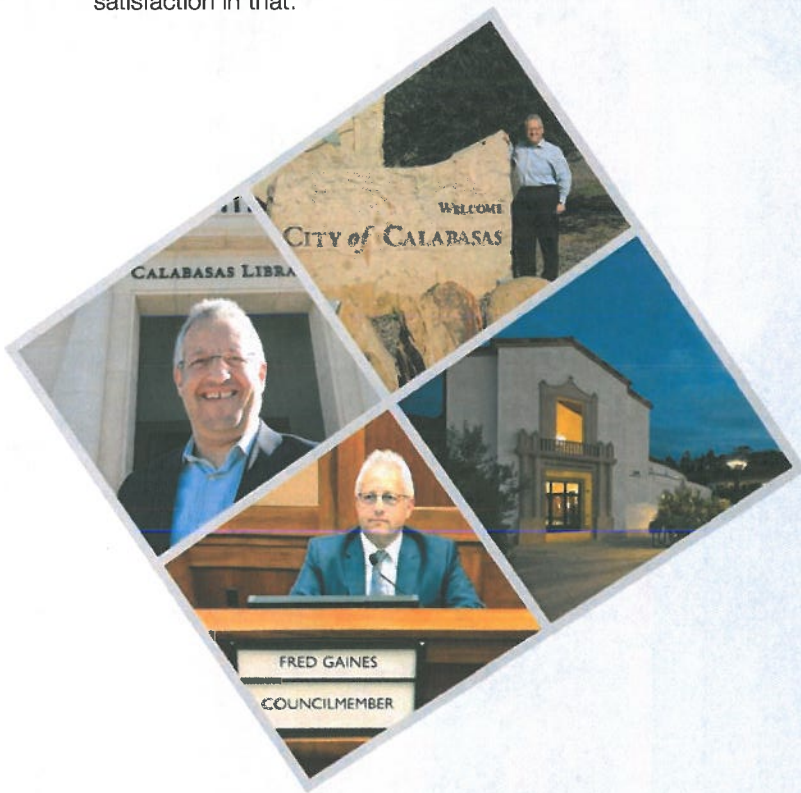


## THE LOCAL “GO TO” GUY

### Calabasas City Councilman Fred Gaines

**S**ERVING IN ELECTED OFFICE ON A MORE LOCAL level is helpful “in achieving things for people that have a direct impact on the community that people live in,” says attorney Fred Gaines, Managing Partner at Gaines & Stacey, LLP, an Encino-based law firm which specializes in land use, zoning and environmental law matters.

According to Gaines, who currently serves on the Calabasas City Council, “I get telephone calls from people who need help with everything from a cracked sidewalk to some idea that they may have for a civic project. We can repair that sidewalk; we can solve problems in a time schedule that’s realistic and achievable, and there’s a lot of satisfaction in that.”



His 30 years in law practice, “makes me a better public servant. I’m better at what I do professionally because I’m sitting on the other side of the table,” he says. “I’m up there having to make decisions for a constituency on land use issues, for example, which are the same kinds of issues I’m litigating.”

In 2011, Gaines was elected to the Calabasas City Council and reelected to a second four-year term in 2015. Gaines also served as the city’s mayor from 2013-2014. Lauded for his many years of community

involvement, Gaines currently serves as the City Council’s representative on the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley Board of Directors and to the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA).

Recipient of numerous awards for public service, Gaines also was a Regent of the University of California, and is a past President of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association, a past Trustee of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, and a Past President of the Executives of the Los Angeles Jewish Home.

A self-described “Valley Boy,” Gaines grew up in North Hollywood, graduated from Grant High School, earned his undergraduate degree in economics and political science from UCLA and a Masters in Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, before receiving his JD from Boalt Hall at the University of California—Berkeley.

“While you get to pontificate on larger issues when you’re in the state legislature or Congress, helping to run an efficient and effective government program that can provide solutions is one of the real advantages of working at a local level and smaller city,” says Gaines.

Los Angeles is so big, so spread out “that it can be difficult there. The most satisfying thing isn’t sitting at meetings and voting on some issue. It’s when someone calls you with a problem and you put the things in motion necessary to get it taken care of.”

The chronic disconnect, Gaines says, “diminishes the closer government is in proximity to the people it serves because you’re dealing with local issues, which are what people care about on a day-to-day basis.”

With no plans to run for higher office, Gaines sees his service on the Calabasas City Council as the perfect way to combine a successful legal career with his passion for local community involvement.

That experience of governing, he says, can’t be learned in a classroom “or even at the Kennedy School. They offer qualitative analysis and case studies that are great, but there’s still no balance there to try and come up with local decisions balancing good solutions.”

All in all, says Gaines, “I see politics as offering an opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives. Simply said, it’s all about trying to make things better and help the community around you. It was something I’ve found very appealing.” 