

# PHILLIP L.B. HALPERN

*San Diego, California*

*Former Assistant United States Attorney · Op-Ed Writer, San Diego Union-Tribune*

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## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

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Distinguished federal prosecutor with 36 years of service in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of California, specializing in complex white-collar fraud and official corruption cases. Tried and supervised some of the most significant public corruption, campaign finance, tax fraud, and financial crime cases in the nation's history. Author of widely noted writings on law, justice, and the rule of law, including a nationally recognized piece on the politicization of the Justice Department under Attorney General William Barr.

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## HONORS

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**Received the Department of Justice Distinguished Service Award — the Department's second-highest honor — on an unprecedented seven separate occasions.**

Also received the highest award given by various federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Customs, and the Food and Drug Administration, among numerous other commendations over the course of a 36-year career.

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## MEDIA COVERAGE & COMMENTARY

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Cases prosecuted by Mr. Halpern have been covered by an exceptionally broad range of national and international media outlets, reflecting the historic significance and public interest of the matters involved. Coverage has appeared in publications as varied as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Times of London*, and virtually every major daily newspaper in the country, as well as general-interest periodicals such as *Esquire* and *Reader's Digest*, and specialty publications including *Sports Illustrated* and *Muscle Media 2000*.

Upon retirement, Mr. Halpern authored a widely circulated op-ed in the San Diego Union-Tribune on the politicization of the Department of Justice, subsequently covered by NPR, CNN, MSNBC, and Newsweek, among other national outlets.

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## CAREER

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### **Assistant United States Attorney (Senior)**

*U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of California*

1984 – 2020

Served for 36 years in one of the nation's busiest federal districts, encompassing San Diego and Imperial Counties and the busiest land border crossing in the United States at San Ysidro. Selected positions held:

- Chief, Major Frauds and Special Prosecutions Section

- Senior Litigation Counsel
- Senior Legal Counsel
- Special Assistant to the U.S. Attorney — senior advisor responsible for interagency coordination, border security initiatives, and public affairs matters, including: Chair, Federal Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee; Representative, SANDAG Binational Regional Opportunities Committee; Chair, U.S. Attorney's Office Hiring Committee; Coordinator, White Collar Institute; Chair, Use of Force Protocol Committee; and Representative, Border Research & Technology Center.

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## REPRESENTATIVE PROSECUTIONS

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- **U.S. v. Randy "Duke" Cunningham** — Largest corruption case ever brought against a sitting United States Congressman.
- **U.S. v. Duncan D. Hunter, et al.** — One of the few successful campaign finance prosecutions of a sitting member of Congress, involving approximately \$250,000 in misappropriated campaign funds.
- **U.S. v. Kyle "Dusty" Foggo, et al.** — Prosecution of the Executive Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.
- **U.S. v. Patrick Frega, et al.** — First federal corruption prosecution brought against sitting California state court judges.
- **U.S. v. Maureen O'Connor** — Tax fraud prosecution of a former San Diego Mayor for misuse of her husband's charitable foundation.
- **U.S. v. Jose Susumo Azano-Matsura, et al.** — First prosecution of a foreign national for making illegal contributions in a San Diego mayoral election.
- **U.S. v. Robert Morales** — Largest bribery case ever brought against an IRS Agent.
- **U.S. v. Mario Saikhon** — Largest individual criminal tax prosecution in the history of the Internal Revenue Service.
- **U.S. v. Robert Bradley, et al.** — First criminal tax case brought against a charitable foundation.
- **U.S. v. Saied Asefi Inanlou, et al.** — Prosecution of an international arms smuggling ring supplying Iran with critical F-14 fighter jet components.
- **U.S. v. Francis George Christie, et al.** — First federal case involving a violation of the Presidential embargo of Libya.
- **U.S. v. A&W; Sales Corp., et al.** — Prosecution of a food contractor responsible for causing a Hepatitis A outbreak in grade schools across the Midwest.
- **U.S. v. Javid Naghdi** — Largest counterfeit prescription drug case prosecuted by the FDA.
- **U.S. v. Metabolife, et al.** — Prosecution of Metabolife International, the largest seller of dietary supplements in the United States.
- **U.S. v. David Jenkins, et al.** — Largest counterfeit steroid ring uncovered in the United States.
- **U.S. v. Richard Anthony Fitton** — First federal case involving the distribution of steroids.
- **U.S. v. William Cambra** — First federal case involving the illegal distribution of Human Growth Hormone.
- **U.S. v. Floyd Landis** — Wire fraud prosecution involving the former Tour de France winner.
- **U.S. v. Gregory Marino ("Operation Bullpen")** — Largest counterfeit sports memorabilia prosecution undertaken by the federal government.

Additional matters included significant prosecutions involving arms smuggling, procurement fraud, money laundering, environmental crime, and technology smuggling.

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## **INTERNATIONAL RULE-OF-LAW WORK**

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- **Tanzania, Zanzibar, and Ghana (1993) — U.S. State Department / USIA Professional-in-Residence** — Selected as the country's first Professional-in-Residence in Africa. Assisted the Government of Tanzania in developing anti-corruption initiatives and drafting money laundering legislation for the Attorney General of Zanzibar. Proposed reforms for the Tanzanian Supreme Court and consulted with the Government of Ghana regarding the creation of a serious fraud office.
  - **Nepal (2002)** — Provided training to public prosecutors and law enforcement officials on corruption investigations and prosecutorial practices.
  - **Philippines (2017)** — Advised law enforcement personnel on corruption investigations and anti-corruption enforcement practices.
  - **Cyprus (1998)** — Negotiated the first working agreement on money laundering between the United States and Lebanon.
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## **FEDERAL INTERAGENCY INITIATIVES**

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### **Founder — Border Research & Technology Center (1996)**

Drafted the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Justice, Department of the Treasury, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy establishing the Center. Played an active role in the creation of the Designated Commuter Lane at the San Ysidro Port-of-Entry and the development of the San Diego Border Tactical Wireless Interoperability Testbed. Early proponent of the NIJ Rapid Pursuit Task Force.

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## **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

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### **Adjunct Professor of Law**

*University of San Diego School of Law*

1988 – 1995

Lectured to upper-class and graduate law students on white-collar crime and corporate criminal responsibility, including corporate liability, multiple representation issues, and attorney-client privilege. Occasionally supervised law review articles.

Also authored a law review article for the University of Tanzania Law School on the subject of plea bargaining in the American criminal justice system.

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## **EARLY LEGAL CAREER**

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### **Assistant Prosecutor**

*Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, New Jersey*

1981 – 1984

Tried a wide range of serious criminal matters, including a complex, multi-defendant heroin RICO conspiracy involving multiple homicides. Also directed an undercover investigation into corruption in the Hudson County

Construction and Building Department, resulting in the indictment of multiple plumbing inspectors for a long-running scheme to defraud the citizens of Hudson County.

**Law Clerk to the Honorable Melvin P. Antell, Court of Appeals**

*New Jersey Superior Court, Appellate Division*

1978 – 1979

Prepared bench memoranda and draft appellate opinions for three-judge panels.

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**EDUCATION**

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**Cambridge University**

*D. Crim. (Cantab), Criminology — 1981*

**Rutgers School of Law, Camden**

*J.D., with honors — 1978*

**Hamilton College**

*B.A., cum laude — 1975 · Four-year starter, varsity soccer*

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**BAR ADMISSIONS**

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California · New York · New Jersey

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**PERSONAL**

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Born in Rockville Centre, New York. Competitive cyclist and former distance runner (sub-2:40 marathon). Interests include single malt Scotch whisky, wine, woodworking, koi keeping, football (soccer), and travel. Married to Marcia Wierda Halpern; father of three sons — P. Griffin Halpern (Ane), Travis F.B. Halpern (Rachel), and Alec B.W. Halpern (Melissa) — and grandfather to Kliff Halpern-Basurko and Arlo Hendrix Halpern.

In 2023, underwent an allogeneic stem cell transplant at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute / Brigham and Women's Hospital following a diagnosis of blood cancer. Suffered a relapse and was subsequently diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). Underwent a second stem cell transplant at UCSD Medical Center in November 2024. Currently in remission. This journey has been chronicled in a public journal (CaringBridge) and in several op-eds published in the San Diego Union-Tribune.