

Aurora Abella Austriaco

Aurora Abella-Austriaco is a Shareholder at Valentine Austriaco and Bueschel P.C.(VAB), an all women owned law firm. Prior to VAB, she was the sole shareholder of Austriaco and Associates Ltd. Austriaco has been in practice for 33 years and concentrates her practice in the areas of business transactions and litigation, commercial litigation, real estate transaction and litigation, mechanic's liens, subrogation actions, guardianship litigation, defense of mortgage foreclosure, title insurance litigation, declaratory judgment actions, partition actions and other special chancery remedy cases. Her clients range from multinational corporations, state and federal credit unions, title insurance companies, hotel and restaurant owners, home health care agencies, lab testing companies, medium to small business owners and individual clients. Prior to owning her own firm, she worked as an associate at Harold I. Levine, Ltd.; as in house counsel for Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund; and subsequently as Of Counsel to Clark Hill PLC.

Aurora served as Past President of the National Conference of Bar Presidents (NCBP), an organization founded in 1950 to provide information and leadership training to state and local bar association leaders from 53 states and territories. She served as past President of the Chicago Bar Association, one of the largest and oldest metropolitan bar association in the country with over 22,000 attorney members and served a two year term as President of the Lawyer's Trust Fund of Illinois. Aurora served eight years as Illinois State Delegate to the American Bar Association (ABA) House of Delegates until her election to serve on the ABA Board of Governors. She was elected the first female and minority President of the Illinois Real Estate Lawyers' Association (IRELA), served on the board of the Chicago Bar Foundation and the Center for Conflict Resolution (CCR). She is a founding board member of the Filipino American Bar Association (Chicago), past board member and current member of the Asian American Bar Association and past member of the ISBA Real Estate Section Council. She currently served on the ABA Credentials and Admissions Committee and on several ABA Presidential Appointments Committees. From 2018-2020, Aurora served a two year term as a member of the ABA House Rules and Calendar Committee and served on the 2020 ABA Presidential Appointments Committee. Aurora previously served as Chair of the Tellers Committee of the ABA House of Delegates, past member of the ABA Standing Committee on Meetings and Travel, past Diversity Director for the ABA General Practice Small Solo Division and past member of the ABA Standing Committee on Bar Activities & Services.

In August 2020, Aurora was appointed by Northern District Chief Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer to serve on the first ever Racial Justice Diversity Committee of the Northern District of Illinois. She was also appointed by Chief Judge Holderman, then Chief Judge of the Northern District to serve as Chair of the 2012 Magistrate Merit Selection Panel and as chair of the 2013 Magistrate Review Selection Committee.

Aurora also currently serves as Commissioner for the Illinois Courts Commission and in 2022 was appointed by Governor Pritzker to serve as Judge to the Illinois Court of Claims.

In addition to bar association involvement, Aurora is also very active in the community. Aurora served as an elected School Board Member for the Maine Township District 207 High School. She was appointed to the Chicago United

Board in March 2022 and in April 2021, Aurora joined the First Women's Bank Advisory Board. In May 2020, Aurora was appointed Chair of the DePaul University Law School Diversity Council and serves on the DePaul University Law School Dean's Advisory Council.

She also serves as President of the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce and serves on the board of the National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP); on the board of the Asian American Coalition of Chicago (AACC); as an Advisory Board Member of Chinese Mutual Aid Association (CMAA); as Pro Bono Legal Counsel for the Federation of Philippine American Chambers of Commerce (FPACC); and as President of the Filipino Executive Network. She served several years as Chair of the Cook County State's Attorney's Asian Advisory Council, twelve years as Commissioner for the Cook County Human Rights Commission, nine years as Commissioner for the Park Ridge Planning and Zoning Commission, as past President of the Maine South Hawkettes Booster Board and past board member of the Park Ridge Juniors. Aurora served a two-year term as President of the Asian American Institute now known as Asians Advancing Justice.

Aurora was elected to the Board and eventually as Secretary of the Board of Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund, Inc. (ATGF), a national bar related title insurance company until it was sold. She also served on the Governance Board of Presence Health Systems St. Joseph's Hospital.

In April 2022, Chicago United presented Aurora with the Toni Cornelius Special Recognition Award. In January 2022, the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, Asian American Bar Association and the Korean American Bar Association jointly recognized Aurora with the "2022 Asian Women in Leadership" award. In October 2021, the ABA GP Solo Division awarded Aurora with its highest award, the "Difference Maker's" award and was recognized by the Private Company Director Magazine's "2021 Outstanding Directors to Watch." In May 2020, Aurora was named one of 50 honorees for the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin and Chicago Lawyer "Salute! Women in Law" awards and was given the Cook County State's Attorney's "Outstanding Community Leader" Award. On March 8, 2020, Aurora was recognized one of the "Top 20 Global Women of Excellence" by the 7th Congressional District Multi Ethnic Task Force Day and in June 2019, was named one of Chicago United's "50 Business Leaders of Color." In May 2019, Aurora was the recipient of the Jesse White, Secretary of State "Justice Laura Liu Trailblazer" Award.

On February 28, 2015, Aurora was the recipient of the prestigious Asian American Coalition of Chicago Lunar New Year Gala "Ping Tom Memorial" Award; was recognized in 2015 as one of "2015 Global FWN100™ Awardees" by the San Francisco Filipina Women's Network and in November 2015, was awarded the "Chicago Filipino Asian American Hall of Fame" Award.

In 2013, Aurora was named one of "100 Women of Influence in Chicago" by Today's Chicago Woman and twice as one of "100 Women Making a Difference." In September 2013, Aurora was awarded the "Sister Margaret Traxler" Award by the Institute of Women Today (IWT) for her years of pro bono work on behalf of IWT. In May 2006, Aurora received the CBA Alliance for Women "Alta Mae Hulett" award, a prestigious award given to women lawyers who have significantly contributed to the advancement of women in the profession. In the same year, Aurora received the 2006 Philippine Chamber of Commerce "Excellence in Law" award. In 2008, Aurora received the "Distinguished Service" Award from Cook County State's Attorney, Richard Devine for her service as Chair of the Asian Advisory Council. On June 5, 2008, Aurora also received the ABA Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) "Legacy

Justice Fund" award. The CLEO award recognizes members of the legal community whose efforts and activities serve to advance the cause of diversity within the legal profession.

In 2023, Aurora was recognized as one of "Top 50 Women Attorneys in Illinois" and was recognized as one of "2023 Power Lawyers" by The New York Times. From 2012 to present Aurora is recognized as a "Leading Lawyer" in the areas of Real Estate Law and Consumer Law and named one of "Top 100 Women Consumer Law" Attorneys in Illinois. From 2013-2018, Aurora was named as one of "Top 10 Women Consumer Law" Attorneys by Leading Lawyers and from 2012-present Aurora was named "Super Lawyers in Real Estate." In July 2011, Aurora was named "Top 100 under 50 Diverse Executive Leaders" by Diversity MBA Magazine.

On April 18, 2009, Aurora was recognized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce one of the "Ten Most Outstanding Filipino American Businessmen" and on April 22, 2009, Aurora was the recipient of the CBA "Vanguard Award" which honors individuals and institutions who helped promote diversity and inclusion in the legal profession and have made the legal profession more reflective of the community. On November 21, 2010, Aurora received the Asian Chronicle USA "Distinguished Young Asian Professional Award." Aurora served as the 2010 Asian American Coalition Event Chair which was hosted by the Filipino Community in January 2010 and attended by over 1,300 people. The Asian American Coalition is an organization comprising of all the Asian communities in Chicago which includes the Filipinos, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Bangladesh, Pakistani, Thai, Laotians, Vietnamese, Indians and Malaysians.

Aurora is a frequent speaker and lecturer at various CLE conferences locally, nationally and internationally. On March 21, 2024, Aurora was one of the panelists at Chicago United's Annual Meeting on the topic of "The Attack on DE&I." On May 2, 2024, Aurora was the keynote speaker at the first DePaul University College of Law APIDA (Asian Pacific Islander Desi Association) month celebration. She also served as the keynote speaker at DePaul College of Law's 2022 Super Lawyers Reception. In celebration of CBA's 150th Anniversary, Aurora will be moderating the "Rule of law and the Independence of the Judiciary" panel. On March 8, 2022, Aurora served as a panelist at the Philadelphia Bar Association's Commission on Women in the Profession "International Women's Day Panel." In January 2021, Aurora was the keynote speaker at the Joint meeting of Greater Orlando Asian American Bar Assn and Jacksonville Women's Bar Association and in August 2021, Aurora participated as a panelist at the NCBP Annual Meeting Conference. In June 2021, she served as a Facilitator for the White House Eviction Prevention Summit and in December 2020, spoke at the NCBP "Women Bar Leaders Conversation."

Aurora served as a 2025 P2P DEI facilitator at DePaul College of Law; panelist at NCBP 75th Anniversary Past Presidents' Special Panel; panelist at the 2020 ISBA Leadership Academy; 2019 ABOTA-The Case for Civility Today and at the 2018 ISBA's 6th Annual Minority Bar CLE Conference. Aurora also participated as a panelist at the 2018 ABA Aviation Litigation Conference on "Civility in the Legal Profession." She was a speaker at the 2017 Tokyo World City Bar Leader's Conference on "Emerging Practice Areas in the Current Legal Landscape" and was a speaker at the Asian Business Summit Meeting in DC. She has been a speaker at programs hosted by the Chicago Bar Association (CBA), American Bar Association (ABA), Asian American Bar Association (AABA), ISBA Real Estate Section, ISBA General Practice Section, ABA Real Property Section and ABA General Practice, Small and Solo Division. In April 2015, Aurora was a speaker at the Ethics Seminar in Barcelona, Spain during a joint CBA/ Barcelona Bar CLE program. In May 2014, Aurora spoke at the ABA Real Property Probate and Trust Conference in Chicago on "Mixed Use Development" and in February 2013, she spoke at the International Trade Fair of the Legal

Profession in Barcelona, Spain and at the Barcelona Bar Association on the topic "Social Role of Lawyers." In March 2013, Aurora was invited to speak before the Tokyo Bar Association International CLE in Tokyo and was a speaker at the CBA Business Delegation in Manila, Philippines. In May 2013, Aurora spoke at the World City Bar Leaders Conference in Frankfurt, Germany, on "Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession: A Challenge for Law Offices and Their Clients" and "The Role of Lawyers in Resolving the Sovereign Debt and Financial Crisis. In July 2013, Aurora was a speaker at the US Korea (KORUS) Law Day Foundation Conference held in Irvine, CA on the topic of "Diversity Initiatives."

Aurora is a contributing author to "Dear Sisters, Dear Daughters: Strategies for Success from Multicultural Women Attorneys (August 16, 2009) published by the ABA Commission on Women and "DISRUPT 2.0. Filipina Women: Daring To Lead" (2016) book published by the Filipina Women's Network.

Aurora was a 2004 Fellow of Leadership Greater Chicago and was a 2013 Edgars Fellow. Aurora also served on the Board of the Hubbard Street Dance of Chicago from 2011-2014 and also served as Co-chair of the Hubbard Street Dance "Bold Moves for Bold Women" event for several years. Aurora is a member of the Economic Club of Chicago, The Chicago Network and the International Women's Forum.

In November 2015, Aurora, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Commerce and Minority Business Development Administration, organized a successful delegation of twenty-eight (28) Asian Small Medium Enterprisers (SMEs) to serve as US Delegates to the Asian Pacific Economic Council (APEC) Summit which was held in Manila, Philippines. On May 20, 2014, Aurora was invited to participate in the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and the U.S. Agency for International Development "Post-Typhoon Haiyan Roundtable." In February 2013, Aurora was the key note speaker for the 2013 Asian American Coalition of Chicago Lunar New Year Gala, a gathering of over 1,200 Asian American community and business leaders in the country and on June 8, 2013, Aurora was the keynote speaker for the Philippine Independence Week Gala event.

Aurora is also the host of her own radio talk show entitled "Sundays with Aurora."

Aurora is fluent in Tagalog. She is married to Dr. Jerome Austriaco and they have two daughters, Danielle and Isabelle.