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Employment Law Expert Speaks at Prestigious Roundtable Event.

– *Bay Area attorney Michele Ballard Miller shares her views on current developments in discrimination and arbitration.* –

San Francisco, Calif. – November 7, 2002 – At today’s prestigious Recorder Roundtable, a quarterly event geared to professionals in the law industry, attorney Michele Ballard Miller (Miller Law Group in Larkspur), offered her opinions and expertise on the latest in discrimination and arbitration issues facing employers in the 21st century.

As a result of her involvement in thousands of arbitration cases over the past two decades, Miller has strong opinions on how the process of arbitration should be handled. At the Roundtable, she shared her concern that we aren’t going beyond the initial question of whether to make arbitration mandatory or not. “Instead,” she says, “we argue over the question.”

Regarding her own approach to arbitration, Miller stated, “I always try to resolve arbitration cases through mediation. With a good mediator, you get right to the facts and determine how to resolve the case; it’s a much more reasonable approach.” She also stated that, “I tend not to agree to mediators who have come from the bench because, in most cases, their last foray into a regular workplace was so long ago that they’ve forgotten what makes companies and employees tick.”

Another major issue discussed at the Roundtable event was sexual harassment and fairness of the judicial process, wherein Miller voiced her views on what those in her profession refer to as the ‘One Free Grope’ case involving a questionable judgement. “Instead of determining severe or pervasive sexual harassment in this case, the judge made up his mind that one grope was not severe enough to send the case to jury. Just as in this one, I see other sexual harassment cases that are determined before they ever get to a jury, in which judges make decisions as the facts and merits of the case before the jury has a chance to make a determination.”

The 90-minute Roundtable also touched on the effect the recession has had on employer litigation risks. “I see two things happening in the current economic climate,” said Miller. “The first is that people

who are motivated to stay and work with their employer are receptive to counseling, training and whatever else the employer can offer because the job market is so bleak. Second, when an employee does leave and can't easily replace their income, there is a greater tendency for them to look back and say, 'It wasn't me, it was the employer' and sue." Miller went on to recommend that employers take an aggressive approach to avoid this type of litigation. "My associates and I try hard to get involved behind the scenes as an employment problem develops for our clients. We find that being proactive is the best defense." She concludes that this approach can help employers avoid costly, time-consuming litigation.

The Recorder Roundtable is just one of many events at which Miller has been invited to speak. And 2003 is booking up fast. She has been invited to be a keynote speaker at the National Retail Federation's annual conference in New York and at the National Council on Education's annual HR Expo in Palm Springs, among other events.

Details about Miller's speaking experience and schedule can be found on her Web site at www.millerlawgroup.com. To schedule her to speak at an upcoming event or to book an interview, call her directly at 415.464.4300 or drop her an email at mbm@millerlawgroup.com. To contact her Public Relations Director, Sandra McGinty, call 949.307.6900.

Michele Ballard Miller is a member of the Labor Law and Litigation Sections of the American Bar Association, the Employment Law Section of the State Bar of California and the Labor and Employment Law Section of the Bar Association of San Francisco. She has practiced exclusively in labor and employment law since receiving her law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, in 1982, and specializes in litigation, including wrongful termination, discrimination, sexual harassment and various other employment claims. Additionally, Miller is an adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco School of Law and has extensive experience in supervisory training, as well as the traditional labor relations areas of collective bargaining, arbitration and related agency proceedings.