

# Daily Journal

JUNE 20, 2018

## TOP 40 UNDER 40

California's leading lawyers of 2018

### Cody S. Harris

Harris has been teaching constitutional law for years and got to put that knowledge into action this spring when he helped Santa Clara County block President Donald J. Trump's executive order against "sanctuary jurisdictions."

Harris has been an instructor in Stanford University's continuing studies program since 2013.

"I always tell my students these aren't dusty old cases somewhere. These are really vital, they matter," he said. "It felt good to be putting my law degree to its highest and best use by defending the rule of law."

Harris helped draft the pleadings and argued a summary judgment motion. He and his team got a nationwide injunction preventing the president from meddling with county budgets, convincing Judge William H. Orrick that Trump's action violated the separation of powers between branches of government. *County of Santa Clara v. Trump*, 17-CV00574 (N.D. Cal., filed Feb. 3, 2017).

But Harris may have made more of a name for himself with his activities outside of the courtroom last year. After neo-Nazi demonstrations in Charlottesville, North Carolina ended in bloodshed in August, Harris heard about a similar demonstration being planned by "alt-right" groups in San Francisco.

He wanted to find a way to protest the "alt-right" march without making the situation worse. He heard about a town in Germany that had a lot of neo-Nazi marches and citizens decided to make a donation to an anti-hate organization for each marcher, as a form of counterprotest.

Harris started a campaign on fundraising site GoFundMe asking people to make donations to the Southern Poverty Law Center. He named the campaign "Adopt a Nazi (not really)."

The attorney figured if he could raise a few thousand dollars for the law center it would be a victory, but the campaign started to gain more traction than he expected. The Jewish Bar Association of San Francisco, where Harris is a board member, decided to lend its support.

"Within about 10 days it raised more than \$160,000," Harris said. "It turned out to be this viral sensation. We were covered in local, national and even international news."



**Keker, Van Nest  
& Peters LLP**

San Francisco  
Practice: Litigation  
Age: 40

Harris commissioned a plane to fly over San Francisco on the day of the "alt-right" rally with a banner proclaiming how much money had been raised in the campaign. The rally was canceled at the last second.

— Joshua Sebold