

Andrea St. Julian



COALITION BUILDING &
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

2024 FINALIST

Andrea St. Julian is a builder of leaders, institutions, and coalitions that are uncompromisingly dedicated to social justice in San Diego communities. While serving on the Pillars of the Community board of directors, St. Julian was instrumental in establishing a coalition of individuals and nonprofits in San Diego that would launch a Participatory Defense community organizing model – one designed to engage community as partners with their defense in the court system and as active participants in challenging unfair criminal justice systems. She mentored coalition members, prompted the community to own and value their work, and consistently positioned those “closest to the pain” as having the most vital voices. San Diego now boasts one of the most robust hubs for Participatory Defense in the nation.

With a leadership style grounded in empathy and trust, St. Julian has trained, supported, and led organizers not just to pass laws, but to advocate and fight for their proper implementation and to participate in the democratic process. One such example is the campaign for the passage of Measure B, a city ordinance to strengthen police oversight in San Diego. To ensure the community did not lose any power when challenging discrimination, illegal force, and other problematic issues, St. Julian alongside others built a coalition representing all walks of life to support Measure B, drafted the ballot measure and implementation ordinance, and advocated for placement of community members on the San Diego Commission on Police Practices.

An attorney by training, she served as president of the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association, where she encouraged Black attorneys to work hand in hand with the community in tackling unjust systems. Her leadership roles with the American Civil Liberties Union, Occupy San Diego, and San Diegans for Justice have also showcased her unshakeable faith in nonviolent, well-organized community power and democratic participation as the most effective drivers of social justice in our communities.

