



LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY AND COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Mike Balmages, Michael Arai Behrens, Mei Tsang, Anna Davis are new to the board of directors

SANTA ANA, CALIF. (June 7, 2018) – Legal Aid Society of Orange County and Community Legal Services (LASOC-CLS), a private non-profit that provides legal advice, counseling and representation to low income individuals on various civil matters, today announced the appointment of four new members of the organization's board of directors: Mike Balmages, Michael Arai Behrens, Mei Tsang and Anna Strasburg Davis. Each member will serve a three-year term.

"We are honored and privileged to welcome the expertise and wisdom of these very talented attorneys to our board," said Kate Marr, executive director for LASOC. "Our organization thrives because of the leadership that works to move our mission forward and bring legal assistance to all members of our communities."

Mike Balmages has lived in Orange County since 1957 and has practiced business litigation law in the county since 1972. Mike recently joined ADR Services, Inc., as a full-time mediator and discovery referee after a long and successful career in private practice. Balmages is extremely active in the Orange County community and has served, among many other volunteer roles, as the lead astronomer for the Reserve at Rancho Mission Viejo for more than 20 years, for which Balmages received 2018's "Spirit of Volunteerism Award" from OneOC.

Additionally, Mike has served as an attorney/coach for the Constitutional Rights Foundation high school mock trial competition. Politically, Balmages was the volunteer OC Chair of the gubernatorial campaigns of Tom Bradley and Dianne Feinstein, as well as Chair of the OC Democratic party. Balmages was the 2016 Chair of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Section of the Orange County Bar Association.

"To me, serving as a board member means helping deserving people move and negotiate the complex settings and systems of the civil justice system," said Balmages of his appointment. He and his wife Mary live in North Tustin close to their three children and seven grandchildren. Balmages is a graduate of California State University, Fullerton and received his law degree from Boalt Hall at University of California, Berkeley.

Michael Arai Behrens represents clients in a wide range of litigation before federal and state courts and arbitral tribunals. Behrens specializes in representing governments and universities and advises institutions facing regulatory action. His past and present clients include the County of San Bernardino, University of California, Los Angeles and the Board of Regents of the University of California.

The son of a Japanese-American mother who was born in an internment camp, Behrens maintains an extensive pro bono practice, with a specific interest in immigration law. Behrens also works with victims of domestic violence in Los Angeles County.

Behrens takes great pride in his work on the board. "Navigating our legal system can be bewildering and expensive. LASOC-CLS gives the neediest and most deserving among us a fighting chance."

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Mei Tsang is a partner at the prestigious business litigation and intellectual property firm Umberg/Zipser LLP. Beyond serving her clients and managing the IP practice in a growing firm, Tsang is committed to her profession and has been repeatedly recognized as a SuperLawyer by her peers. In 2014, Tsang was awarded the Rising Women In Technology Award by the Advancing Women in Technology (AWT) Organization. Law360 also named Tsang as one of Law360's Minority Powerbrokers. She also was recognized by Parenting OC Magazine as one of the Hardest Working Moms of Orange County.

In addition to her new role at LASOC, she also serves on the Board of Directors for both the Orange County Bar Association (OCBA) and its Charitable Fund, as well as being on the Mentoring, Nominating, and Audit Committees. Tsang also serves as the subcommittee chair for the Anti-Counterfeiting Committee with the International Trademark Association (INTA). Tsang is involved with a host of other organizations, including serving as an executive council member for the Asian Americans Advancing Justice as well as a board member of the non-profit institution, The Portal. Tsang is also an active member of the Orange County Asian American Bar Association (OCAABA), and the OC Women Lawyers Association (OCWLA).

Tsang has two active boys and a creative husband Steve. They love being in Orange County, enjoying the riches this county has to offer and also love to travel around the world.

Anna Strasburg Davis directs the Public Interest Programs at UC Irvine School of Law where she is primarily responsible for running the Pro Bono Program, a program she launched in 2009. Under her leadership, more than 90% of UCI Law students have volunteered over 60,000 hours to provide legal services to those in need. Prior to running the Pro Bono Program, Davis ran the Pre-Law Outreach Program at UCI for five years. This program helps prepare students from disadvantaged backgrounds understand the demands of law school. She continues to work closely with the student leaders for the Public Interest Law Fund (PILF); and coordinates the Public Service Scholars.

Previously, Davis worked as an attorney for the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles where she represented abused and neglected children in foster care in Los Angeles County. After starting her own family in 2006, Davis segued into the practice of family law and then to University of California, Irvine Law just after the inaugural class matriculated in 2009. Anna graduated from University of California, Santa Barbara and attended the University of Michigan Law School.

"The attorneys and volunteers that work with LASOC-CLS are on the front lines defending the rights of the underserved in Orange County and South Los Angeles," said Davis. "In a community that the world perceives as wealthy and entitled, LASOC-CLS is shining a light on the gross disparities, ensuring that lack of funding does not mean a lack of justice."

Each year, LASOC serves more than 114,000 people, including seniors and low-income individuals, and promotes equal access to the justice system through advocacy, legal counseling, innovative self-help services, in-depth legal representation, economic development and community education. The organization is governed by a 29-member Board of Directors and managed by executive director, Kate Marr, who joined LASOC-CLS in December 2016.

About Legal Aid Society of Orange County

The Legal Aid Society of Orange County is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing free legal aid services to our community's most vulnerable populations: veterans, the homeless, families, and low-income individuals. For over 58 years, LASOC has spread its services— advocacy, legal counseling, community education, and legal representation—throughout Orange County and southeast Los Angeles to bring equal access to justice for all.

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