



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

NIKKI PRESLEY MILIBAND

The Times They Are a-Changin'

California became a state in 1850, and included a large political subdivision known as Los Angeles County. But in 1889, local pride and a growing economy led to the creation from a portion of Los Angeles County the boundaries of a new county known as "Orange County." In September 1901, the County Courthouse—also referred to as the "Jewel of Orange County"—opened with public offices and one solitary courtroom. One month later, with a county-wide population of approximately 20,000 people, ten lawyers met to form the Orange County Bar Association.

In 1915, the then presiding judge, Z.B. West (the father of Judge Franklin G. West—who became the namesake of the OCBA's highest award given each year), requested that the bar association write the governor requesting a second courtroom. By 1923, the OCBA had 36 members, and the court received its third courtroom due to the onslaught of bootlegging cases.

Not surprisingly, there were few females involved in the OCBA at that time. Of the 36 attorneys, there was one female, Clara Cushman, who is believed to have been the first female attorney in Orange County. In 1948, Celia Woolever Young was appointed as a judge of the City Court for Huntington Beach, and became the first woman judicial officer in Orange County. Flash forward a few decades to 1975, when several OCBA women lawyers created the Women and Individual Rights Section of the OCBA, which then formed its own organization, the Orange County Women Lawyers Association (OCWLA). In 1979, OCWLA became an OCBA affiliate bar association. OCWLA's goal is the advancement of women in the legal profession and the support of diversity both on the bench and in law firm partnerships. OCWLA now has over 400 members and remains one of the OCBA's strongest affiliate bar associations.

This year, as the OCBA celebrates its 117th anniversary, Orange County now has a population in excess of 3.1 million, with over 18,000 attorneys, and an OCBA membership of approximately 7,500 to 9,000 (depending on the time of year). We've come a long way from 10 members and one judge! We now have 27 practice area sections, 19 committees, various task forces, a Young Lawyers Division with over 600 members, a Master's Division with over 1,100 members, and 15 affiliate bars. The OCBA hosted over 436 meetings at its headquarters (not to mention the numerous events at other locations), and certified 12,685 hours of CLE this past year. It also offered the Lawyer Referral Information Service and modest means program, supported by over 200 lawyers and OCBA staff assisting low- and modest-income residents.

We've come so far in so many ways. I am honored to be the 11th female president of this 117-year-old organization. Our first female president, Jennifer King, took the reins in 1990. The others following

her in ascending order are Michelle Reinglass, Jennifer Keller, Danni Murphy, Judge Kim Hubbard, Julie McCoy, Cathrine Castaldi, Lei Lei Wang Ekvall, Dimetria Jackson, Ashleigh Aitken, and now me. We also have two more in the queue—Deirdre Kelly and Larisa Dinsmoor. And the 25-member OCBA Board of Directors this year is, for the first time, composed of 17 women.

And the OCBA continues to promote diversity. To name just a few examples, in 1970, three individuals—Wallace Davis, Mike Silvas, and Judge James Perez—conceived of a Hispanic bar association. In 1974, the Orange County Mexican American Lawyers Club was established by fourteen lawyers (which later changed its name to the OC Mexican American Bar Association). In 1992 it became the Hispanic Bar Association of Orange County (OCHBA), and became an OCBA affiliate shortly thereafter. With Darrell White leading the way this year as its president, the OCHBA has grown to over 240 members. In 1993, the Orange County Asian American Bar Association (OCAABA) was established, and this year, with Jeannie Kim as its president, membership has reached approximately 225. OCAABA became an OCBA affiliate in 1994. The Italian American Lawyers of Orange County (previously Lex Romano) held their first meeting in April of 1978, disbanded in 1993, was reformed in 2002, and became an OCBA affiliate in 2005. We now have the Celtic Bar Association; Iranian American Bar Association, Orange County Chapter; Italian American Lawyers of Orange County; J. Reuben Clark Law Society, Orange County Chapter; Orange County Jewish Bar Association; Orange County Korean American Bar Association; Orange County Lavender Bar Association; and Thurgood Marshall Bar Association as OCBA affiliates. All of these organizations are a testament to the rich diversity of the Orange County legal community.

To this end, the OCBA Diversity Committee this year was elevated from a task force back to a standing committee. The amazing co-chairs of the Diversity Committee are Rick McNeil and Mei Tsang. In addition, the OCBA's Young Lawyers Division has created a Diversity & Inclusion Chair, who sits on the Diversity Committee. If you would like to get involved on the Diversity Committee, or in any other way with the OCBA, please contact me.

As Bob Dylan sang years ago, "the times they are a-changin'," and I can't wait to see all the good work these organizations do in the future!

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