



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

DEIRDRE KELLY

Diversity and Inclusion: What the OCBA Is Doing

As I said at Judge's Night, my theme this year is Inclusiveness. The OCBA is committed to fostering diversity and inclusion within the Orange County legal community. OCBA's Diversity & Inclusion Committee, led by Rick McNeil, Mei Tsang, and John Gibson, is at the forefront of these efforts.

The Diversity & Inclusion Committee, in connection with the Membership Committee, led by Christina Zabat-Fran, is spearheading a pipeline program to identify and reach out to diverse attorneys of all ages and practice areas. We hope more attorneys will become involved with the OCBA and its various committees, sections, and divisions, and become active in its leadership.

The Committee is also planning to help host the OCBA's Summer Social Celebrating Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging on June 13, when local firms' summer associates can be welcomed to our legal community and shown that Orange County is a place for all attorneys. As Mei Tsang said:

We had a wonderful event last year and saw so many new faces. We want to continue this new tradition to welcome everyone—especially those who may not know the OCBA—as well as having a chance to mingle with everyone. This is a time to connect and to enjoy each other's company along with understanding that we can achieve more in terms of diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Additionally, the Committee is currently planning its annual seminar entitled, "How To Be A Successful Legal Sponsor/Sponsee." Kyhm Penfil, who is organizing the event, explains, "the annual seminars focus on the benefits of inclusion and the most effective way to achieve it." Past programs include topics such as: "Moving Forward Through Diversity: Perspectives on the Collective Benefits of a Diverse Workforce in Today's Legal Environment" (a business case for diversity); "Habits of the Mind: Implicit Bias in the Workplace" (the psychology of implicit bias); "Gender Pay Equity—Has The Time Arrived? Recent Judicial and Legislative Developments"; and "What You Didn't Learn in Law School: Specific Advice From Experienced Attorneys Who Have Been There" (panel discussion and table mentoring). Further, the OCBA's Young Lawyers Division (YLD) has a Diversity & Inclusion Committee that coordinated its second annual YLD and Affiliate Bar Meet & Greet Social in March to facilitate networking between leaders from the Affiliates and newer lawyers.

In addition to these programs, the OCBA works closely with its Affiliates including the OC Asian American Bar Association (OCAABA); OC Korean American Bar Association (OC KABA); OC Lavender Bar Association (OCLBA); Hispanic Bar Association of OC (OCHBA); Iranian American Bar Association (IABA); OC Women Lawyers Association (OCWLA); and Thurgood Marshall Bar

Association (TMBA). Joe Ursic especially appreciates the support the OCBA has given the OCLBA over the years, most recently supporting its panel discussion at Chapman Law School on what it means to identify as LGBTQ+ in the legal field, how to be oneself within law firm environments, and why diversity is important.

You may have seen a dedicated Affiliates page in *Orange County Lawyer*, where Affiliates promote and showcase pictures from their events. The magazine also features "Who's Who in the Affiliates" each year. Additionally, the OCBA hosts its annual meeting with the Affiliates and the State Bar, where Affiliate leaders get to meet and mingle with each other and with OCBA and State Bar leaders.

Additionally, the OCBA Appointments Committee presents recommendations for appointment to the Board of Directors sufficient to fill any vacancies in the eight appointed directorships. The bylaws provide that the Committee's recommendations shall take into account the outcome of the election with a view to ensuring that the composition of the Board fairly represents, to the extent reasonable, the diverse composition of the Association, including minorities, women, lawyers in firms of various sizes and sole practitioners, public lawyers, lawyers with various specialties, and lawyers in various geographic areas.

The OCBA also includes a policy on Diversity in its Section Chair handbook that states: "The OCBA urges Section Chairs and program planners to identify and include in their MCLE programs qualified speakers who reflect the wide and rich diversity of the legal profession and Orange County."

These rules are in line with the OCBA's Vision Statement:

Our Bar will be the leader of the legal community in Orange County combining the best features of a professional society and a trade association. . . . **We will demand inclusivity**, charity, and relevancy by and for our members as they strive for the betterment of themselves while being professionally fulfilled.

The OCBA also coordinates with and supports another local legal group promoting diversity and inclusion, Orange County Coalition for Diversity in the Law (OCCDL).

As someone once said, diversity is being asked to the party, but inclusion is being asked to dance. The Committee is always looking for new ideas and members to make the OCBA more diverse and inclusive. Please contact me or any of the Committee co-chairs if you are interested in being involved, or if you have ideas to share.



2019 Diversity & Inclusion Committee



Deirdre Kelly is the 2019 OCBA President. She can be reached at DeirdreKelly@ocbar.org.