



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

DEIRDRE M. KELLY

What a Year It's Been!

Thank You

I want to thank all of the wonderful people who made this year possible. First, thank you to my incredibly supportive husband, Howard Privette, and son, Liam, who have endured my late nights and busy schedule this year. Next, Trudy Levindofske and the OCBA staff are the true engine of the OCBA. Trudy has been with the organization for thirty years, and many of the staff have been with it for decades as well. Trudy has been the trusted advisor for many years of OCBA presidents and, without her support and guidance, I would not have known what to do! Also, I relied extensively throughout the year on the intelligence, good judgment, and humor of my Executive Committee: Nikki Miliband, Scott Garner, Larisa Dinsmoor, and Dan Robinson. And thank you to OCBA Board and to the many past OCBA Presidents who provided invaluable advice throughout the year. Additionally, I want to thank Gialisa Gaffaney, the editor of *Orange County Lawyer*, for her assistance with my monthly President's Page. Most importantly, though, thank you to all of the OCBA members who participated in our many events, sections, committees, and programs this year. Looking back, I'd like to highlight just a few of the things we did together.

Programs for Law Students and Young Lawyers

This year we brought back the Law School Task Force to begin or continue specific programs for law students and recent graduates including: the **law student leader mixer**, where leaders from the schools' student organizations mingled with each other and OCBA board members, leaders from OCBA affiliates, and the Young Lawyers Division; a **3L mentorship program**, where we matched third-year law students with leaders in the OCBA who practice in their area of interest; **OCBA Section Day and OCBA Affiliate Day** at the law schools, where the sections and affiliates tabled at the law schools to interact with the students, inform them about opportunities, and provide general advice; the **Bar Waiters Mixer** for graduates who just took the California Bar Exam, where they were able to get support from OCBA members while awaiting bar results; the **Mentor Café**, where new attorneys were able to meet and talk with leaders in the Orange County legal community in an informal, small-group setting; and the **New Attorney Academy**, which offered a series of six classes to help new lawyers develop critical legal and professional skills and engage with experienced attorneys and judges. Law students and new lawyers are the future of our profession. I was honored to be able to work so extensively with such a bright and eager group of people and am so encouraged that these will be the lawyers leading our bar, and our profession, in the years to come.

Supporting Our Judiciary

I was fortunate to travel to Sacramento with Assistant Presiding Judge Larsh and OCBA Past President Ashleigh Aitken this year, in conjunction with the Bench Bar Coalition, to help maintain open lines of communication with local legislators about the importance

of our courts, including how lack of funding affects the courts' ability to serve the public.

State Bar Changes

I owe a huge thank you to Immediate Past President, Nikki Miliband, for having the foresight to create OCBA's State Bar Task Force last year and leading it this year! Who knew that this year the State Bar would propose such radical changes, including allowing non-lawyers to practice law, non-lawyer ownership of law firms, and the use of artificial intelligence to provide legal advice absent a lawyer's involvement. Nikki and the task force monitored the potentially monumental changes proposed by the State Bar, and made sure that the OCBA membership was both well-informed and had a meaningful opportunity to respond. They surveyed members' opinions, organized a town hall forum where the State Bar came to OCBA and presented their proposed changes, and helped the phenomenal M.C. Sungaila (thank you!) draft a thorough written response expressing important ideas and concerns raised by our OCBA membership.

Expanding and Engaging Membership

We also focused on expanding and engaging the OCBA membership. The Membership Task Force, chaired by Christina Zabata-Fran, worked with Diversity Committee co-chair, John Gibson, to develop a leadership pipeline for the OCBA, focusing particularly on encouraging diverse lawyers to seek out OCBA leadership positions. The Diversity Committee, led by Rick McNeil, Mei Tsang, and John Gibson, continued their great work by putting on OCBA's Summer Social Celebrating Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging and the annual MCLE Seminar on sponsorship and mentoring. We also held a leadership summit where the leaders of the OCBA's Sections, Divisions, Affiliates, and Committees came together with the OCBA board and other bar leaders for an evening of networking and synergy. Additionally, we put an event on How to Become an OCBA Leader to engage with everyone interested in OCBA leadership.

The Future

I am confident that I am leaving you in great hands. Next year's president, Scott Garner (whose sage judgment and advice I relied on heavily this year), is a well-prepared, thoughtful, and enthusiastic leader who will carry on the great traditions of the OCBA. In 2020, I look forward to serving as president of OCBA's Charitable Fund, enjoying my new job as Assistant Dean of Career Services and professor at Western State College of Law (the oldest law school in Orange County!), and working with its amazing students and alumni. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President in 2019. It was an honor.



Deirdre M. Kelly is the 2019 OCBA President and the Assistant Dean of Career Development at Western State College of Law. She can be reached at DeirdreKelly@ocbar.org.