



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

SCOTT B. GARNER

All for One and One for All: The Orange County Legal Community

"All for one and one for all." These famous words from the classic novel *The Three Musketeers*, written by my favorite novelist, Alexandre Dumas, perfectly captures the mood of the many incredible Bar leaders who regularly come together to help not only their own constituents, but the entire Orange County legal community.

Amidst the breakout of COVID-19, the Orange County bar community came together like never before to share information and ideas, and to address this unprecedented crisis. One of the things immediately implemented was a weekly call among not only the Orange County Bar Association leadership—including our Section chairs, Committee chairs, Task Force chairs, and Board members—but also the presidents of our fifteen Affiliate bars. By definition, there is significant overlap between the membership of our Affiliates and the membership of the OCBA. Indeed, to qualify as an OCBA Affiliate, 60% of a local bar association's membership must also be members of the OCBA. The presidents of each of our Affiliates—from, alphabetically, the Association of Business Trials Lawyers to the Thurgood Marshall Bar Association, and everything in between—participate in our weekly calls, sharing their ideas and experiences, and learning about others'. In all, ninety-six Bar leaders are invited to participate in our weekly calls.

At the inception of these weekly calls in March, the discussions were dominated by COVID-19 issues. We regularly heard from the OCBA COVID-19 task force (chaired by OCBA Treasurer Dan Robinson) about the many free webinars we were offering, and heard from our OCBA and Affiliate leaders which webinar topics would most benefit their members. The COVID-19 Task Force also gratefully accepted the help of our many Bar leaders in finding speakers from among their memberships. This input and time dedication from our Affiliate and other leaders made these free webinars far more valuable not only to OCBA members, but to the entire Orange County legal community.

Our weekly calls also featured updates from the different Section, Committee, Task Force, and Affiliate leaders on the types of programs they were sponsoring to help their members deal with the pandemic, as well as discussions about issues that were common to all of us. This served the dual role of giving each other ideas for our own programs, but also allowing our leaders to promote their own programs to a different and more diverse audience.

Another frequent topic of discussion at our weekly calls was the status of our various courts. We often heard from the heads of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers (Todd Friedland), the Trial Lawyers Association (Jonathan Dwork), or the OCBA Business Litigation Section (Sharon Oh-Kubisch) on what was happening with the civil courts during the closures. In a recent call, we were lucky enough

to have Civil Supervising Judge James Di Cesare provide a report to us. OCBA Board members and criminal lawyers Kate Corrigan and Tracy Miller also provided frequent updates on the criminal courts, including how they were managing to balance fears of the pandemic with criminal defendants' constitutional rights. We also heard from the leaders of our Trust and Estate Section (Kenneth Petersen and Noah Herbold) about the probate court and the leader of our Family Law Section (Danny Monarch) about our family law court. These inciteful and knowledgeable updates helped all of us to be able to pass on relevant information to our own constituents.

As things appeared to be calming down a bit in late May, with working from home and virtual webinars becoming more routine, we switched our weekly calls to bi-monthly. But then came the death of George Floyd, and the legal community once again kicked into high gear to address yet another global issue. Our calls soon were dominated not with talk of the virus, but rather talk of the search for racial justice, and what our respective organizations' roles would be or should be in that search. The OCBA's newest task force, the Racial Justice Task Force, soon took center stage during these calls, with regular reports and discussions led by the Task Force's co-chairs, Larisa Dinsmoor (OCBA President-Elect) and Dimetria Jackson (2012 OCBA President). And perhaps the greatest sign that our legal community leaders were coming together were the many Affiliate leaders who volunteered to become members of this new OCBA Task Force—contributing their invaluable experiences and diverse ideas. The Racial Justice Task Force is truly a result of our strengthened community of Orange County leaders.

So, back to Alexandre Dumas. As we have seen during this most difficult year, the Orange County Bar community is led by a selfless group of individuals who are passionate, diligent, and talented. Each has come together to ensure that their passion, diligence, and talent benefits not only their individual Section, Committee, or Affiliate Bar, but, as much as possible, each individual member of the Orange County legal community. All for one. At the same time, none of these leaders has asked for personal recognition for their hard work, but instead each has worked for the common good. One for all. I could not be more proud of this amazing group of individuals and leaders.



Scott B. Garner is the 2020 President of the Orange County Bar Association. He is a partner at Umberg/Zipser LLP in Irvine, California, where he practices complex business litigation, with a focus on lawyer liability and legal ethics. He can be reached at sgarner@umbergzipser.com.