



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

DANIEL S. ROBINSON

2022: A Time to Reconnect

It is my great honor and privilege to serve as the Orange County Bar Association's 2022 President. I have come to understand the importance of this role over the last several years under the incredible leadership of Todd Friedland, Nikki Miliband, Deirdre Kelly, Scott Garner, and Larisa Dinsmoor. Although I have big shoes to fill, I pledge to do my best and abide by the goals of our mission statement: "To Enhance the System of Justice, To Support the Lawyers Who Serve It, and To Assist the Community Served By It."

We are all very fortunate to be members of such an exemplary Bar and legal community. As the son of two lawyers, I grew up witnessing firsthand what Ron Russ calls "the camaraderie of the Orange County Bar." Having practiced law in New York City, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and other cities, I can proudly assert that I'm not aware of a better Bar in the country.

And it didn't happen by chance. The Bar we have today has been shaped and molded for over 100 years by the attorneys who came before us. These were dedicated leaders and visionaries who worked tirelessly with OCBA staff to help shape this Bar into the flourishing organization it is today. While other Bars have been beset by bankruptcies and infighting, ours has persevered through good times and bad, created enduring traditions, and led our legal community as both a professional society and a trade association. Indeed, many pillars of our legal community, including the Public Law Center and Project Youth Orange County Bar Foundation, originated from the OCBA.

We must continue that great tradition during this challenging time. It feels like a decade has passed since March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic emerged and began to wreak havoc on our country and community. When then-President Scott Garner called to ask if I could chair the COVID-19 Task Force—an assignment we thought might last a few weeks or months—no one knew how deeply the coronavirus would change our way of life as lawyers. No one knew we'd be forced to spend over a year staring into camera pinholes attempting to practice law via Zoom with kids screaming, dogs barking, and lawnmowers buzzing in the background. The OCBA's most important events and traditions, from section meetings to annual events, were relegated to computer screens with dozens of lawyers waving their hands and posting emojis as if to offer proof of life.


But the OCBA rose to meet every challenge. When courts began closing, the OCBA set up a COVID-19 web page (<http://www.ocbar.org/covid-19>) with information about closures and court protocol changes. When in-person events were cancelled, the OCBA began broadcasting over forty free Zoom webinars to help keep OCBA members informed and connected. It maintained a commitment to the Orange County community, with fundraisers and food

drives. In a time of great anxiety, fear, and suffering, the OCBA persevered in a manner consistent with its long legacy of character and determination.

And now, as the OCBA faces a new set of challenges (such as our State Bar proposing to allow non-lawyers to practice law and have an ownership interest in law firms), one thing is abundantly clear—we are ready to move forward together. My goal as president is for 2022 to be a time of great reconnection, reengagement, and return to normalcy. With vaccination rates rising and the storm of COVID-19 receding (knock on wood, don't prove me wrong Omicron!), I am excited to reconnect with each of you, and to reengage in person with our incredible legal community. The first major event of 2022 will be Judges' Night on Thursday, January 13, 2022, where the OCBA Board will once again be sworn in live. On February 22, 2022, we plan to hold the Charitable Fund's Grant Giving reception in person. On March 24th, the OCBA plans to re-launch its "Spring Mixer" event where members can meet and greet amidst live music. In the late spring, we'll hold the Judge Kenneth Lae Annual Golf Tournament. This summer, we plan to hold the in-person annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion event, as well as the Raise Your Glass Charitable Fund event. Next fall, we plan on holding the Volunteer Reception and relaunching the OCBA Fall Mixer event.

We understand that the return to normal will be gradual for many. Everyone will reconnect at their own pace and in the manner they're most comfortable. Some may only attend outdoor events, others are ready for indoor events, and others may choose to wait on both. Whatever your speed, the OCBA is ready for you in 2022.

We appreciate that we are returning to a "new normal" where many practices and efficiencies from the last two years will remain in effect (e.g., virtual webinars, meetings, and other events). The most important thing is that we collectively assert our readiness to move into the next chapter of this great organization, and that begins with reconnecting. To that end, I ask that every member make an individual effort this year to renew their relationship with the OCBA and the Orange County legal community in the manner of their choosing. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and we all want OCBA to emerge stronger than ever for the generations of lawyers to come.

I wish you all a wonderful and healthy 2022, and I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president. 

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