



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

MICHAEL A. GREGG

2023: A Preview of the Year Ahead

I am honored to serve as OCBA President in 2023. At the outset, I would like to thank Dan Robinson for his strong leadership in 2022, especially for successfully bringing us back together in person. Dan displayed unwavering commitment and dedication to the mission and interests of the OCBA and provided steady leadership amid constantly changing circumstances. I would also like to thank the many OCBA leaders, volunteers, and staff members who helped make the OCBA an organization we can and should all be proud of.

I follow a great line of OCBA presidents and am privileged to serve this great organization. Candidly, however, I never aspired to be OCBA President. As an introvert, the idea of being the spokesperson for the OCBA was not immediately appealing to me and took some warming up to. After co-founding the Thurgood Marshall Bar Association, an affiliate organization of the OCBA, I was encouraged by former OCBA President Dimetria Jackson to get involved with the OCBA. Over the years, and as a result of my involvement, I have seen the unmatched power of the OCBA and its affiliate organizations to make a positive impact in the lives of many. In 2023, I encourage you to find one new way to get involved with the OCBA or an affiliate bar association—even if it is beyond your comfort zone.


Maya Angelou once said, “[i]f you don’t know where you’ve come from, you don’t know where you’re going.” In preparing for the role of OCBA President, I wanted to learn more about the OCBA and its prior leaders. As a result, I learned how the OCBA has helped establish the existing Orange County legal community. I also developed a fuller understanding and appreciation of the rich legal history in Orange County, and I want to learn more. One of my goals in 2023 is to form a committee that starts the process of telling the many stories that comprise the history of the Orange County legal community, including stories of individuals, institutions, cases and events, with an emphasis on audio and/or video recordings.

Orange County is home to some of the most monumental cases in United States history. Some examples include the courageous citizens in *Mendez v. Westminster School District* who sued to desegregate Orange County schools in the 1940s, the groundbreaking award and decision in *Grimshaw v. Ford Motor Company* and its impact on tort cases throughout the United States, and the landmark decision *Reitman v. Mulkey* in which the U.S. Supreme Court prohibited states from enabling private racial housing discrimination. Orange County is also home to some of the most impactful institutions in the nation including the Public Law Center (a pro bono law firm that provides access to justice for low-income residents of Orange County), the

Constitutional Rights Foundation–OC (a nonpartisan nonprofit inspiring Orange County students through civics and educational experiences), Community Legal Aid SoCal (an organization dedicated to fighting injustice and advocating for social, economic, and racial equity), and Project Youth OC (dedicated to keeping at-risk youth in school). I learned that these institutions all originated from the OCBA, and we can all benefit from learning about their genesis. Telling the history of our legal community in an audio/visual format may help illuminate the road ahead, bring us closer together, and inspire the next generation to new heights. If nothing else, it should be informative and entertaining. Please email ideas to HistoryProject@ocbar.org so we can add them to the growing catalogue of Orange County historical topics.

This year, I will also endeavor to deepen the coalition between the bench and the bar. I’d like to help OCBA members better serve their clients by working with the Orange County Superior Court to develop a series of video tutorials to educate OCBA members about the court, about practicing before the various panels (such as the Complex Panel, Family Law Panel, and Probate/Mental Health Panel), and about appearing before individual judges. Educating OCBA members about the particulars of practicing before the various panels and judges should help to alleviate inefficiencies and bottlenecks and is consistent with the OCBA’s Mission Statement “To Enhance the System of Justice, To Support the Lawyers Who Serve It, and To Assist the Community Served By It.”

The challenges of the pandemic also underscored the importance of OCBA members being able to access the resources of the OCBA and to connect with each other. Thanks to the work of the OCBA App Development Task Force (Dan Robinson, Christina Zabat-Fran, Josh Ji, Kelly Galligan Dunn, and me) and OCBA staff, including Dennis Slaughter, we will be rolling out a new and improved mobile app in 2023 with features to enhance the member experience, highlight practice areas, and facilitate connections.

The OCBA has played an instrumental role in the history and development of the Orange County legal community, but so much more lies ahead. I look forward to hearing your ideas and working with you to make the OCBA and our entire legal community stronger. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as OCBA President. 

Michael A. Gregg is the 2023 OCBA President and a shareholder at Littler. He represents companies in all aspects of labor and employment law. You may reach him about these or other issues by emailing michael@ocbar.org