



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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In Good Company

“*Turan mo ang iyong kaibigan, sasabihin ko kung sino ikaw.*
(Tell me your company, and I'll tell you who you are.)”
~ Filipino proverb

My dad, a man of many maxims, always told me that a key to success is to be in good company—if you surround yourself with people who are kind, intelligent, compassionate, inventive, and ambitious, you will not only feel encouraged to strive for great things yourself or better yourself, you will become these things yourself.

Looking back on times in my life when I've felt most inspired and have reached great personal milestones, I realize that my dad was right. In those moments, I had people helping me up, pushing me forward, cheering me on, waiting for me when I got there, and asking me what's next. I also had people a few steps ahead of me, challenging and motivating me to keep going.

On my pathway to practice, I could not have asked for better company than what I gained as a member of the inaugural class at the UC Irvine School of Law. My classmates were brilliant and supportive. They treated each other like family. What stands out most to me is the profound and consistent amount of initiative taken. Whether it was a new club, publication, pro bono project, or way of organizing ourselves, at UCI Law, we were always starting something.

Does like attract like? Is initiative contagious? Whatever the case, I was in good company with a community who identified issues and creative solutions, always asking why things have been done one way before and how we can do things differently now.

When it came to the next move, I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew what kind of lawyer I wanted to be. I wanted to be a lawyer who is a leader, who brings people together, who builds things, who helps others grow. One cold call and a couple of interviews later, I landed at a long-time and well-loved Orange County brand. The rest is history.

It was the first General Counsel I worked for who introduced me to the Orange County Bar Association. One day, while up to my eyebrows in redlining and redacting, I was invited to join the legal team for a meeting of the OCBA Corporate Counsel Section. Over a CLE presentation and Pacific Club cheesy bread sticks (if you know, you know), I met my next kin, who have since become some of my most ardent mentors, greatest champions, and dearest friends. This section, comprised of the very best legal eagles who serve as trusted stewards for Orange County's most admired companies, helped me see what I

could strive to be. Venturing into our OCBA at large only reinforced this more.

Now, my local bias may be showing. I grew up right here in Orange County, a proud double anteater (zot zot zot), Rainbow sandals well worn, with a standing order at In-N-Out, and a scarf at the ready for when it drops to a chilly 69 degrees.

Looking through orange-colored glasses, now, as a General Counsel for a multinational corporation, I have the opportunity to work with talented legal teams all around the world. From my perspective, Orange County is one of the most professional, collegial, and impactful places to practice. There is no better company for lawyers than what we have right here in the Orange County legal community.

This is a community of great strength, entrepreneurial spirit, and excellence. Tell me you're a member of the Orange County Bar, and I'll tell you who you are.

Presidential priorities? It's simple: Let's be the very best we can be, help a lot of people, and have a lot of fun.

Specifically, I want to bring spotlight to the Bar's hard-working sections and committees, which reflect true centers of excellence. I want to further fuel the Bar's leadership development efforts, which are integral to the longevity and impact of the OCBA. I value and am dedicated to continuing to foster the Bar's longtime partnership with the local accredited law schools, integral relationship with the courts, and significant service to our increasingly diverse business community. I plan to seek feedback from all stakeholders and members to learn what you most need from the Bar, and how I can help meet those needs. I want to support past presidents' initiatives to honor our shared history and forge an innovative and successful path to the future. And in all ways, I am committed to celebrating just how awesome it is to be a lawyer, supporting each other in finding joy every day, both in our practice and life's other pursuits.

Now, let's get started.



Christina M. Zabat-Fran, the 2024 President of the OCBA, serves as General Counsel and a Corporate Executive for a global luxury fashion group. Never one to ignore a dress code, Christina would like to remind you that for Judges' Night, it's "business attire – but make it fashion."
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