



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

CHRISTINA M. ZABAT-FRAN

Once Every Four Years

“The days are long but the years are short.”

~ Gretchen Rubin, author of *The Happiness Project*,
former clerk for Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

Time seems to be moving so quickly, doesn't it? Long gone are those few days before the New Year when, for an ephemeral moment, time seemed to stand still. Now, the quiet is gone and we find ourselves somehow in February. The packed calendar teeming with meetings and get-togethers feels like it is angling to make up for what was “lost.”

As lawyers, balancing competing needs amongst clients, family, and ourselves, we demand a lot from time. We look at how we are using our time. Do you, like me, ever wish you had just one more day to get things done? Well, this year, we actually do; 2024 happens to be a leap year.

Admittedly, I'm a multitasker and gravitate towards the self-improvement section of the podcast library on my early morning walks most days. I am relentlessly, and perhaps unreasonably, convinced I will figure out how to get more done (I'll keep you posted). I also revel in the momentum that can come with changes in time, seasons, new years, new months, daylight savings, what have you.

I think that's why this temporal quirk, a whole extra day added to the calendar, strikes me as magical, and even more, motivating. So, as a self-declared lifelong student of time management and calendar optimization, I find it fitting to share a moment of reflection with you on the significance of this additional day that graces our calendars just once every four years.

At its core, the leap year is really a calibrating measure. Since it takes approximately 365.24 days for the Earth to complete its journey around the sun, we add an extra day every four years—a subtle adjustment that prevents us from drifting out of alignment with the changing seasons.

Stepping back, I appreciate that this cosmic encore has so many parallels to the practice of law and of life. We, as lawyers, often find ourselves navigating complex and dynamic landscapes, adapting to constant changes in laws, regulations and societal norms. Just as the leap year corrects our calendar, we must continuously refine and adapt our own practice to stay in sync with the ever-evolving legal environment. As OCBA members, we know this well and embrace it. Thanks to top-tier presentations on important developments in the law this year by our own OCBA Sections, Divisions, and Committees, and enriched by our own OCBA member talent and expertise, we are regularly up to speed, growing, and looking ahead.

The meticulous calibration of our calendars is also akin to the true precision required in our profession. Legal counsel demands careful attention to detail, a thorough examination of every nuance, and an unwavering commitment to accuracy. In the transactional practice

realm, my corporate law colleagues often jest about the gravity of comma placement, and we do because there's truth to the heart of it. Words have meaning—one small change can have significant consequences and material impact.

This recalibration, however, is not just about correction, precision, and excellence in every day. It's about a careful reflection on the broader landscape of our profession. Sure, we're leaping this year, but where are we going? Are there areas that need improvement? Is the practice aligned with the changing needs of clients and society? How can lawyers be forces for positive change? How can I become the best lawyer I can be?

Know that the OCBA is here to support you throughout your career and all the adaptations and innovations to come. I encourage you to explore the many ways the OCBA momentum moves us forward together. Look ahead for outstanding programming, from continuing legal education to adventures in well-being. Download the latest *Raising the Bar* podcast for your morning walk or evening commute. Check out our mobile-friendly website for engaging on the go.

I have begun to feel deeply that, perhaps despite my best efforts, it's not all about getting more done. Time, what I would propose is the most valuable asset in our profession, requires a judicious approach. Time is such a precious resource for lawyers, often working against pressing deadlines and billable hours. As I innately strive to be “doing the most,” I can't help but remember that, while the days are long, the years are short. In a matter of moments, this extraordinary year, too, will come to an end. For me, this leap year serves as a reminder to use our time wisely, finding a balance between the demands of our professional responsibilities with the necessity for personal well-being. I can be hard on myself sometimes. If you can relate, join me and consider giving ourselves some credit – if time is truly flying by, then let's make sure we're having fun.

The leap year offers much more than just an extra day on the calendar. May this additional day serve as a catalyst within each of us for positive change, growth, and the continual pursuit of excellence. 

Christina M. Zabat-Fran, the 2024 President of the OCBA, serves as General Counsel and a Corporate Executive for a global luxury fashion group. Her most prized accessory is her handwritten, illustrated, well-loved calendar, which she contends coordinates with every outfit. Her email is christina.zabat@lanvin-group.com.