



## PRESIDENT'S PAGE

MEI TSANG

# Unlimited, Together We Are Unlimited

It is hard to believe this is my last article. Honestly, it was one of the most daunting aspects of being President: having to write something every month and writing two months in advance to ensure it is appropriate and timely. I don't know who is reading this . . . to ease my anxiety about writing, my partner Ryan Dean says, "Hey, no one reads these anyway!" Yet, I am pleasantly surprised when one of you reaches out to me via email or in person that you liked what I had to say. It is that connection that counts. This was my theme, after all: be curious, get connected, and make changes.

So here we are, twelve months later, and here is what I learned from being curious and getting connected. While I may be OCBA President, organizing programs and solving issues, the Bar is truly the sum of its parts. It's like a cruise ship, and I'm not the captain—just the cruise director for a year. There are so many people, within OCBA and beyond, who make this organization run smoothly.

The best part of this job was attending events and meeting so many of you. I learned the traditions of the Italian Bar, had spring rolls and mooncakes at OCAABA's Moon Festival, played pickleball with Collaborative Courts, and even learned the Hustle with Justice Served at Community Legal Aid. I've celebrated with you all over town and witnessed the quiet, often unseen, work you do, without fanfare or social media posts, like my time with Thorey and Craig at Orangewood where foster children stay when the adults in their lives cannot provide for them. This year also marked milestone anniversaries for many of our community organizations:

- 50 years of OC Women Lawyers Association
- 40 years of Orangewood Children's Home
- 30 years of Collaborative Courts
- 20 years of OC Korean American Bar Association
- Inaugural year of South Asian Bar Association of Orange County

OCBA had its own impressive record:

- 7260 members
- 26 sections and 33 committees
- CLE hours certified: 10,624
- Volunteers who served on committees or spoke at CLE: 855
- Total meetings: 551 meetings (with 230 meetings on-site, 95 off-site meetings, and 226 virtual meetings)
- Leadership roles that are filled each year: 201

We added the Emergency Response Task Force early in the year to address the L.A. fires, created the AI & Law in Technology Committee, the Legal Podcast History Committee, and the Law School Liaison. We also hosted the Inaugural OCBA Community Fair, where 23 organizations, from our Superior Court, Public Defenders, District Attorney's offices, law schools, nonprofits, and affiliate bars showcased our legal community. Families and four-legged friends came out to enjoy a day of fun and amazing OCBA talent.

This has been a tumultuous year in our country and in our world, and I am proud that our county came together and tackled issues. I started out this year with the hopes to be curious, to connect, and to make changes. I tried my best to do it for the bar, but I know I also did it for myself. For that, I have to thank all of you for inviting me to things, for showing me your world. I will treasure this experience for life. And on we go, next year, we are journeying into the 125th year of OCBA's history. It's time to reflect and celebrate. Shirin Forootan will be the anchor that carries this ship forward. She has already helped change the bylaws and shape our strategic plan. We are in good hands as leadership continues to grow.

I want to leave a present for you. I had the privilege to witness the investiture of President Matt Parlow to Chapman University recently. He presented the poem "Continue" by Maya Angelou. I had never heard of this poem before, and it truly moved me. In part, here are a few verses for you:

My wish for you  
Is that you continue  
Continue

To be who and how you are  
To astonish a mean world  
With your acts of kindness  
Continue

To allow humor to lighten the burden  
Of your tender heart  
Continue

....

To remind the people that  
Each is as good as the other  
And that no one is beneath  
Nor above you  
Continue

....

To let gratitude be the pillow  
Upon which you kneel..  
Continue

....

And by doing so  
You and your work  
Will be able to continue  
Eternally

We lawyers love logical, structured sentences, and poems remind us that we need words that touch our souls, that are not linear and can dance through our minds. To that, enjoy my friends, and continue.

Finally, I want to express a heartfelt thanks to our remarkable Editor-in-Chief, Gialisa Gaffaney. Her friendship, insight, unwavering support (for not yelling at me when I turn in my page late) have been a true gift, and I will forever cherish this year of service as President because of her guidance and all of your support.



*Mei Tsang wants to thank all of you for reading her words, and she especially wants to thank her family, her team at UZ, and all her friends for helping her through this year and life in general. She welcomes you to stay in touch and to continue to invite her to see your world. She can be reached at mtsang@uzllp.com.*



