



A Taste of the Year Ahead

There is a lot of pressure in writing your first President's Page. It's not like Instagram, where I can substitute content with an adorable picture of my kids, or Facebook, where I can rally troops around the travesty of a "McRib season" and end with a hashtag #McRib24/7. I can even handle our firm blog, which either highlights a local group that was brave enough to ask me to speak or another award given to Wylie and Bette Aitken.

This space is different in that it is sacred to me. It has been the home of the OCBA presidents past, many of whom are my mentors. Two of them gave me jobs. As I approach my daunting task—to help inspire, lead, and motivate the legal community—I look at the picture above my desk and know all is well. It's a pastoral scene, a beautiful field lit by the morning sun. The dew shines on the emerald blades of grass. The motivational message below the picture speaks to me, especially today. UNDERACHIEVE: The tallest blade of grass is the first to get cut by the lawnmower.

I realize that I cannot emulate the great bar presidents of the past. I can't worry whether a bar leader will send me an email that my column contains a dangling modifier, or fret when someone asks if I have even heard of passive voice. I can only be me, for better or for worse, and hope to entertain you as I let you know about the OCBA's happenings each month.

I have a passion for this organization. When I was elected, I contemplated what I could accomplish in my time as president. Then fate led me down a path. I am the proud Chairwoman of the 32nd District Agricultural Association, appointed by the Governor to oversee 150 acres in the heart of Orange County.¹ I share this position with Vietnam veteran Nick Berardino, who opened my eyes to the lack of services available to veterans. The OC Fair is trying to assist by building a Veterans Memorial area, hosting a Veterans Day event, and educating the public about its history as the WWII Santa Ana Air Base.

At the last Veterans Day event, I was honored to meet Medal of Honor recipient Tibor Rubin. He received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery as an Army corporal during the Korean War. Of the 6.8 million military personnel that served in Korea, only two Medal of Honor recipients came from Orange County.

Raised in Hungary, Corporal Rubin was liberated from a concentration camp in Austria after losing his father, mother, and ten-year-old sister to a gas chamber. He came to America in 1948, became a U.S. citizen, and in appreciation, joined the Army in 1950. His countless acts of bravery, including surviving thirty months in a North Korean camp, earned him the distinguished Medal of Honor

and two purple hearts.

When I meet veterans like Corporal Rubin, I am in awe of what people will give for this country. But Corporal Rubin is not the typical veteran you will meet in your day-to-day life. It is not because veterans are not around us each day. They are. The veterans you meet are not in full dress uniform, and may not present the clean-cut image we associate with a decorated war hero. They are in Orange County, perhaps standing on your street corner, and they need our help.

I was surprised to learn how great the need is, and the lack of a centralized group to assess what resources are available and how we can work together. My choice for installing officer, the Honorable Lon Hurwitz, works tirelessly to assist the veterans who come into his court due to

mental health, homelessness, and drug issues. The newly formed Veterans Legal Institute and the legal aid centers face these challenges each day, and our law schools aim to provide clinical help. With so many talented and compassionate people trying to assist, why are we not making greater strides to truly celebrate veterans by being their advocates?

To answer the call, I want to form a task force to address how the OCBA can help. At the end of the year, I want to formalize a standing committee that assesses the needs of the veteran community, catalogues available resources, and provides a way for our OCBA members to give back to the veteran and military community. I also look forward to continuing the work of the OCBA in advocating for our courts and generating more involvement by our younger lawyers in OCBA activities.

In closing, I look forward to serving this organization with everything I have to offer. I feel blessed to have been elected by my peers, and to lead an organization I have been involved with since my career began. I love volunteering with the OCBA, and I hope to earn your respect as its president. It is truly a great honor.



Corporal Tibor Rubin and Ashleigh Aitken

ENDNOTE

(1) The 32nd DAA is the OC Fair. I will try not to mention the Fair in every article. Also, Justice Bedsworth doesn't own the copyright on endnotes, so don't email me that I am a comedic hack.

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