



## PRESIDENT'S PAGE ASHLEIGH E. AITKEN

### OCBA Stars: The Next Generation

As president of the OCBA, I get to participate in a lot of legal events and attend almost all of the big legal dinners. One of my favorite honors is getting to speak at the swearing-in ceremony for the new lawyers who successfully completed the great rite of passage—the Bar Exam. *Dun Dun Dun*. (I feel any reference to “the exam that must not be named” needs to be followed by ominous tones.) It is inspiring to meet the next generation of lawyers, meet their parents and partners who shepherded them through the process, and hear what they hope to accomplish. I am not saying that our members have lost their passion for the practice, but the sea of smiling faces looking back at me as the new lawyers take their oath of office is akin only to the looks of practicing lawyers when I end an event before 9:00 p.m.

The recent ceremonies, one for the graduates of Chapman Fowler School of Law and the other the State Bar ceremony for Orange County, included another diverse and hopeful group of new attorneys. As the representative to the local bar association, I am often asked, “Why should I join the OCBA? What is it?”

Any hesitation on my part could be deadly. I know Trudy, the OCBA Executive Director, would have my head if I didn’t have a prepared answer that left each new admittee scrambling for applications as they walk out. I highlight our twenty-five sections, designed to educate them in almost every area of the law, the committees that work in our community, and the opportunity to develop business and network at events like our member mixers.

Inevitably, the new lawyers politely listen to my pitch before asking the question that is really on their mind . . . how to get into the Young Lawyers Division. The stampede moves past me to the OCBA membership table, filled with flyers for Del Mar Racetrack events, holiday mixers, and beach clean-ups. How can I compete with that?

The Young Lawyers Division is such an important and integral piece of the OCBA family. YLD, JSYK, is 1DFUL. Open to lawyers practicing five years and under, the group focuses on the important task of making the transition from law school to law practice more fluid. YLD puts on successful MCLE presentations, organizes community events, and fosters camaraderie through social and sporting activities. I played on the “Bad News Barristers” as a first-year lawyer, and while it was difficult for a group of competitive lawyers to end a season without winning a game, I made friends that endure to this day. (I also learned the important rule that you can run through first base without being tagged out. The fact that I slid safely into first was not



I’m a little bit country, he is a little bit . . . mortified this picture exists.

as rewarding as I expected, as I was bleeding from the road rash on my thigh and both benches were laughing at me.)

Most important, the Young Lawyers Division represents the future of the Orange County Bar Association. I probably shouldn’t state this publicly, for fear of hurting the YLD membership numbers, but I believe amongst the members of the YLD is a future President of the OCBA. The members of the YLD devote so much time to our organization during the toughest years of their legal career. They are active in supporting our OCBA Charitable Fund, they show up in force for our community events, and they hold a seat on our board, offering a unique insight in the direction of our organization. If you are a new lawyer, consider becoming active in your profession’s bar association through YLD, and if you employ younger lawyers, encourage them to give back and cultivate the skills and business relationships that ensure their success.

#### From the Courthouse to Broncs and Bulls

In addition to being the President of the Orange County Bar Association, I have the pleasure of serving as the Chairwoman of the Orange County 32nd District Agricultural Association, better known by its moniker the “OC Fair.” I am at the Fair almost every day, which earned me the nickname “Queen of the Fair” from my brother. I took it as a compliment, and am looking to get a tiara made out of bacon. If you think people don’t understand what I do as OCBA President, try explaining my role on the OC Fair Board and why I’m on Facebook



every day eating an ear of corn and a mini-bucket of donuts. (Answer: because they are delicious and I have no regard for my cholesterol.)

This year the OC Fair is celebrating its 125th anniversary and acknowledging its humble beginnings as a small fair in 1890 in Santa Ana to the current twenty-three-day extravaganza on the 150-acre state fairgrounds. While the fair is the largest attraction, like the OCBA, it too has some hidden gems. Until it closes later this month, take some time to explore the public art projects, the working farm, or the future site of our Heroes Hall veteran space. You just might see me there—I’m the one in the edible tiara.



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