



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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In Retrospect, the OCBA Is Awesome

As the OCBA turned 100 fifteen years ago, OCBA President Danni Murphy took on the monumental task of trying to document some of our history. Her articles remain on the OCBA website for your reading pleasure. As my time as president nears its end and I start to look back on 2016, I also find myself thinking about many OCBA accomplishments throughout its history. I recommend you read Danni's "Centennial" series and see for yourself. In the meantime, enjoy these highlights:

The Birth of a Bar: Ten lawyers attended a formation meeting on November 22, 1901 in the newly completed Santa Ana courthouse. The OCBA's first president was Victor Montgomery, a criminal specialist, veteran of the Civil War, and scribe of the bill that created Orange County.

The Second Decade: Orange County's population had grown to 35,000 in cities such as Santa Ana, Anaheim, and Huntington Beach. We had twenty-six attorneys by 1915. Horace Head led the OCBA from 1918-1925. One of the OCBA's mandates was to keep up the standards of honorable practice in the profession and bring ethical lapses to the attention of the courts.

Roaring 20s: Membership pushed beyond thirty-six and dues climbed to \$3.00. Alexander Rutan was OCBA President in 1927. Women were permitted on the grand jury and in trial court juries. In 1922, Clara Cushman became the county's first female attorney.

1930s: The court now had three judges and Franklin West practiced in Orange County. At the May 11, 1934 meeting, it was announced that member Mr. Mize had recently taken a pig as a "fee" and the pig would soon be barbecued for an OCBA meeting dinner—provided he could get the pig fattened up.

1940s: The actions of Orange County citizens inspired language of great historical significance. *Westminster School District v. Mendez*, 161 F.2d 774 (1947) received national attention as the first time a federal judge denounced segregation in public schools. The *Mendez* case helped forge a path that led to *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.

1950s: Disneyland opened. The old courthouse was the site of the first partially televised murder trial. In a misstep, the bar's Executive Committee made a chilling recommendation in 1953 that prospective members be asked screening questions such as, "Are you now, or have you ever been a member of any subversive organization?" and "Have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" But they got it right in 1955 when the OCBA kicked off a referral service for low-income clients. A year later, the program was taken over by the Orange County Bar Association Auxiliary (later known as Lawyers' Wives and finally as the Orange County Law Advocates). But our bar

went even further. In April 1958, every member of the OCBA was pledging financial support for legal aid. On May 9, the Legal Aid Society was incorporated.

1960s: When James F. Penny took office as president of the OCBA in 1969, OCBA membership had reached 1,028 in a county of 1,200,000. We grew out of the "Old" Courthouse and it closed its doors on December 13, 1968.

1970s: As is often the case in Orange County, the bench and bar came together to improve the community. This time, it was an idea for a law firm that would provide *pro bono* legal services. Public Law Center was born and has devoted years to achieving the goal of equal justice under the law for Orange County's poor and under-represented. Oh, and the court moved to the shiny new courthouse in the Civic Center.

1980s: Court overcrowding and backlogs became the norm. In 1983, Orange County had sufficient cases at the appellate level to warrant a court of appeal, so Governor Brown appointed the first four justices in the Third Division: John K. Trotter, Sheila Prell Sonenshine, Thomas F. Crosby, and Edward J. Wallin, all present or past OCBA members. In January 1988, Orange County's Federal District Courthouse opened with the Honorable Alicemarie H. Stotler and the Honorable J. Spencer Letts. As most of our members know, Alicemarie Stotler was the first woman to be elected to an office in the OCBA, first female attorney in the Orange County District Attorney's Office, and the first female attorney whose practice was in Orange County to be appointed to the federal district court.

1990s: 1990 OCBA President Jennifer King heralded the decade in her first President's Page with "Welcome to the Nineties Boys!" After ninety years, the OCBA finally had a female president (we have had nine since, and will have two more in the next three years). King stressed that "professional" should be a term that could be applied to every attorney practicing law. Andy Guilford, 1991 OCBA President, called upon the OCBA and its members to "celebrate our diversity and differences while simultaneously working for our common goals." He wrote in his first President's Page that, to be a truly great bar association, "we must work for others as we work for ourselves."

2000-2009: The California State Supreme Court heard oral argument in the Old Courthouse on October 4, 2001. Franklin G. West Award honorees included OC legal legends such as Jack Ryan, Tom Malcolm, Wylie Atiken, and Don Gray. Harmon Scoville Award recipients included Grace Emery, John Hurlbut, and Alan Crivaro.

2010-2015: Under the guidance of President John Hueston, along with various task forces, volunteers, and others, the OCBA made the decision to purchase a permanent home. As stated by John Hueston: "It offers more than twice the current leased space of the OCBA at a carrying cost less than the monthly lease amount. The building will be fully paid in fifteen years. The new space will include training and seminar rooms." Indeed, the OCBA-owned building has become home to Section meetings, committee meetings, and outreach events.

The OCBA, its members, its volunteers, and its results are darned impressive. It is times like this I am so thankful to be an Orange County lawyer. Tune in next month for a discussion of what we have been up to for the last twelve months.



Todd G. Friedland is the OCBA's 2016 President and practices business litigation. Portions of the foregoing were lovingly plagiarized from Danni Murphy's "Centennial" series. Thank you, Danni, for working so hard to gather and preserve OCBA history. Reach Todd at your own risk at heyttodd@ocbar.org, todd@sf-lawyers.com.