

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

TODD G. FRIEDLAND

2016: An OCBA Collaboration

In January, after months of outreach efforts to hear from OCBA members, and laying the groundwork for the OCBA's 2016 efforts, I was installed as President. Many people asked what was on tap for "your year as President." My response was often that 2016 was not "my year." No, 2016 was just another year in the

long and wonderful history of the OCBA. I was merely one of its shepherds along with the OCBA Board of Directors, its staff, Section leaders, Committee chairs, the over 1000 volunteers who assist the OCBA every year, and countless others who contribute to the OCBA's success. So 2016 was not "my year." It was "our year." The OCBA epitomizes collaboration at the highest level, and I am honored to be a part of it.

We, collectively, accomplished many things in the OCBA's 2016 drivers identified at Judges' Night: An inclusive OCBA; diverse membership; diverse opinions; diverse outreach; mentoring; civility; and enriching the community. Here are some of them:

■ **Stand Up for Homeless:** Homeless issues in the Civic Center have been constant news items this year. Between homeless people feeling mistreated and neglected, the public and Civic Center employees feeling uncomfortable in the area, and political finger-pointing and passing of the homeless hot potato, homeless issues remained front and center and people were affected. After a long absence of OCBA legal services outreach in the Civic Center, the OCBA returned in force. Regular weekly outreach was conducted by Legal Aid in conjunction with the OCBA and, on October 22, 2016, the OCBA held its Stand Up for Homeless legal services day at the newly opened "Courtyard" shelter adjacent to the Civic Center. Over 70 volunteers tackled over 100 legal issues that present barriers to transitional and permanent housing for members of the homeless population.

■ **Civility Task Force:** Many thanks to Justice Richard Fybel and incoming OCBA Secretary Scott Garner for accepting the difficult task of crafting civility guidelines for the OCBA and its members. They, and their blue-ribbon task force, have spent countless hours on this worthy project that can be used to educate the most seasoned lawyers, as well as future Orange County practitioners.

■ **1L Kickstart:** Michelle Philo, John Sganga, and the 1L Kickstart Task Force worked with representatives from Orange County's four ABA-accredited law schools to offer every 2016 1L an opportunity to meet with a practicing law-



yer to ask questions and get advice. Topics of conversation included civility, law school survival tips, and the practice of law in Orange County. I commend the law schools for being forward-thinking and encouraging their students to participate. Also, thanks to the hundreds of volunteers who have stepped up to take a 1L to lunch.

■ Affiliate Bar Associations: In continuing our efforts to be an inclusive bar association where a multitude of viewpoints and perspectives converge, the OCBA continued to expand its Affiliate Bar program and has started the process of simplifying the Affiliate Bar certification requirements. The Association of Business Trial Lawyers (ABTL) and Orange County Korean American Bar Association (OC-KABA) are the newest OCBA affiliates. Who's next? Perhaps the Filipino Lawyers of Orange County (FLOC).

■ New Sections: The Criminal Law Section of the OCBA launched. Honestly, I had nothing to do with it. But people smarter than I worked hard on generating interest, and it won unanimous support from the Board. Next up is formation of a Trial Section focused on issues important to trial lawyers across all practice areas. Mark Wilson and Gerry Klein are leading the charge and I am delighted to serve on the formation group.

■ Bias Committee: Did you know that the Standards of Judicial Administration ask the courts to create a committee on bias in conjunction with local bar associations to review instances of bias in the courtroom? Based on the lack of such committees in California, no one did, except Assistant Presiding Judge Nakamura who brought it to our attention. As a result, Judge Nakamura is working with Diversity Committee Chair Rick McNeil to create a task force that will explore the viability and scope of such a committee.

■ Ethics, Court Rules, and Codes: OCBA Committees like the Administration of Justice Committee and Professionalism and Ethics Committee regularly scrutinize proposed ethics opinions, court rules, and code sections, and offer their views for consideration by the Board. The OCBA then forwards many of the approvals, suggestions, or criticisms to the appropriate state-level organizations. In 2016, the AOJ Committee, through the OCBA, submitted recommendations on more than 155 proposals to the Judicial Council of California (ten of which were legislative). The Professionalism & Ethics Committee submitted recommendations on nine proposals to the State Bar concerning Rules of Responsibility and Conduct.

■ So, so much more: There is so, so much more the OCBA accomplished in 2016. For instance: (1) The OCBA Charitable Fund raised over \$260,000 in 2016, which will support many worthwhile programs serving the Orange County community; (2) the Leadership Committee held its first annual trivia night bringing together members of the Masters Division and Young Lawyers Division; (3) the OCBA Board was majority female; (4) over 1,000 members volunteered for various OCBA efforts; (5) OCBA members packed a shipping container with food in record time for Stop Hunger Now. This list could go on for pages and pages. You, and this organization, are beyond impressive.

■ And, now, for some thanks:

This is another one of those monumental tasks. Listing all of the people who made 2016 a great year and kept me from getting in too much trouble? Impossible. But please allow me to call out a few folks who tolerated my stumbles, fumbles, and all of the other accoutre-

ments to being OCBA President.

Editor Gialisa Gaffaney. It is no easy task editing *OC Lawyer* each month—that is especially true when she has to chase down Justice Bedsworth and me on a regular basis after the deadline for our columns. Gialisa also had the unenviable task of editing my jokes in an attempt to make them funny. I am proud of *OC Lawyer* magazine and Gialisa is a big reason for its success. Gialisa, being the person she is, will deflect the praise to her OC Lawyer staff, including graphic designer Andrew Hart, social media and advertising maven Jane Kim, and law student externs, and I agree.

Trudy Levindofske. Our amazing Executive Director Trudy Levindofske: for once, I am speechless. I cannot thank you enough. Trudy runs the OCBA. Beyond that, Trudy must wrangle the Board and the Executive Committee. And beyond even that, Trudy must not only tolerate a new President every year that implements a new agenda, but who also does things differently than the year before, and so on. She does it seamlessly and exceptionally. Trudy, without you and your staff (Carole, Shannon, Dennis, etc.), the OCBA would not be the organization it is today, and each President would fail miserably. Note to OCBA membership: In bar association circles, OCBA's executive leadership is respected and emulated. We are very fortunate.

ExCom and the Board of Directors: We laughed, we cried, we argued, we collaborated, we commiserated, and we came together to tackle all manner of items to improve the OCBA, its members, and the community. The respect I have for each of you is immeasurable. I know you will do great things in the coming years. Just know that I will be watching . . . really, I will. Don't mess up. I'll find out, and then . . . I'm just kidding; there's no way you'll mess anything up (I did enough of that to last the OCBA a few years).

Stephens Friedland LLP. John Stephens is the best law partner in the world! John and I met as opposing counsel years ago and have been having a great time practicing business litigation together for over ten years. When we met, I admired his professionalism, brains, and (most importantly for this year) willingness to pick up his partner's slack. In 2016, that included going to trial while I went to Hawaii. SFLLP is also fortunate to have Tami, Tim, Tiffany, Carolyn, Amy, and Haydee in the mix. Thanks to all of you for carrying a little extra water and supporting the OCBA.

My Family. Hi D'Ann, Ashlyn, Aubrey, and Aidan! Remember me? I have to hand it to my family. They have been so supportive of the morning, noon, and night OCBA commitments that were compounded by work commitments and other activities that kept me away from home. They understood that the work the OCBA does is important, and they were happy to be a part of it. Sure, I missed some dinners, school functions, date nights, sports practices (for the kids), surf sessions (for me), and even a 2000-mile road trip. But we maximized our time together and none of us has any regrets. My family makes it possible to do what I do; my family puts a smile on my face every day; my family is awesome. D'Ann, Ashlyn, Aubrey, and Aidan: I love you so very much.

Thank you all for allowing me to serve the OCBA.



Todd G. Friedland is the OCBA's 2016 President and practices business litigation. If you are reading this on December 1, 2016, take heart, he only has 30 days left in his term and cannot do much damage in that period of time. Catch him while you can at heyodd@ocbar.org, todd@sf-lawyers.com.