



**IN PERSON**

# BRIDGING THE GAP<sup>®</sup>

Bridging the Gap<sup>®</sup> is a comprehensive all-day program designed to help novice attorneys develop a foundation in practical skills, techniques, and procedures that are essential to the practice of law.

*\*Exclusive event for attorneys admitted to the State Bar after January 2016\**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026**

Registration & Breakfast: **7:30 AM - 8:00 AM** Program: **8:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

**Western State College of Law**, 15101 Red Hill Ave, Tustin, CA 92780 – Classroom 254 (Second Floor)

Join our esteemed lineup of speakers who will share their insights and experiences across numerous practice areas. Learn valuable tips and gain practical knowledge that will help bridge the gap between law school and law practice.

**8:00 AM - 9:00 AM**

## **NAVIGATING YOUR WAY THROUGH COURT**

*(1.0 General MCLE)*

**Hon. Theodore R. Howard**, *Orange County Superior Court*

**Hon. Nick A. Dourbetas**, *Orange County Superior Court*

**Laura G. Lopez, Esq.**, *Partner, Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith, LLP*

This program will introduce participants to the fundamental principles of both procedure and civility for making appearances in court. Attendees will learn best practices for planning for and preparing for court appearances and understand the stages of a case from litigation through trial. Participants will also receive a “view from the bench” from sitting superior court judges on how counsel should prepare and conduct themselves in court to effectively advocate for their clients.

**9:15 AM - 10:15 AM**

## **BREAKOUT 1 WITH SECTION AND PRACTICE AREA LEADERS**

Family Law, Trusts & Estates, Commercial Law & Bankruptcy, Employment Law and Real Estate Law

Learn about different areas of law from practicing attorneys representing various OCBA Specialty Sections and OCBA Affiliate Bar Associations during this invaluable networking opportunity.

**10:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

## **THE COMPETENT LAWYER: STRONG MIND, STRONG BODY, STRONG LEGAL PRACTICE**

*(1.0 Wellness Competence MCLE)*

**Lita Abella, JD, BCC, ACC**, *Lita Abella Coaching, Consulting, and Mediation Services*

This program educates new attorneys on the critical connection between personal wellness and professional competence as mandated by California Rules of Professional Conduct. Attorneys operate in high-stress, high-stakes environments, yet many legal professionals experience burnout, chronic stress, and sedentary work habits that undermine mental clarity, sound judgment, and emotional stability—all essential to competent practice. Participants will learn evidence-based wellness strategies across four key pillars—mindfulness/meditation, exercise, nutrition, and sleep—and engage in practical, time-efficient movement activities compatible with demanding legal schedules.

**11:30 AM - 12:15 PM**

## **NETWORKING LUNCH WITH OCBA AND YOUNG LAWYER DIVISION LEADERS**

# BRIDGING THE GAP®

12:15 PM – 1:15 PM

## THE BUSINESS OF LAW

(1.0 General MCLE)

Abbas K. Gokal, Esq., Partner, *Gokal Law Group*  
Gerald A. Klein, Esq., Of Counsel, *Klein & Wilson*  
Suzanne B. Leslie, Esq., Owner, *Leslie Law Firm*

While law school teaches students how to be lawyers, they rarely prepare students on how to start and run a business. Understanding the business of law enables lawyers to better serve their clients. This program focuses on the business aspects of running a successful law firm, including marketing and advertising, case management, billing and collections, hiring and supervising employees, insurance, and trust account management.

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

## BREAKOUT 2 WITH SECTION AND PRACTICE AREA LEADERS

Business & Corporate Law, Appellate Law, Business Litigation, Criminal Law and Public Interest

Learn about different areas of law from practicing attorneys representing various OCBA Specialty Sections and OCBA Affiliate Bar Associations during this invaluable networking opportunity.

2:45 PM – 3:45 PM

## ETHICAL ISSUES FOR YOUNG LAWYERS: EIGHT WAYS TO STAY OUT OF HOT WATER

(1.0 Legal Ethics MCLE)

Michael S. LeBoff, Esq., Partner, *Klein & Wilson, LLP*

This program looks at the Rules of Professional Conduct and discusses eight ways that young lawyers can minimize the chances of being on the wrong end of a legal malpractice or a State Bar complaint by adhering to their ethical obligations.

OCBA Members	<b>\$75</b> (40% off)
Non-OCBA Member	<b>\$250</b>
Law Student Member	<b>\$25</b>

Register online at [ocbar.org](https://ocbar.org)

Advance registration required. Limited Seating. For assistance, please contact the OCBA at [education@ocbar.org](mailto:education@ocbar.org) Registration Deadline: March 4, 2026.

### THANK YOU SPONSORS



Due to space limitations, Bridging the Gap® is only offered to attorneys admitted after January 2016 and who have never attended an OCBA Bridging the Gap event. Registration deadline: March 4, 2026. No refunds after this date. This activity is approved for Minimum Continuing Legal Education Credit by the State Bar of California in the amount of 4.0 hours, including 1.0 hour of Legal Ethics and 1.0 of Wellness Competence, as appropriate to the content of the activity. OCBA is a State Bar approved MCLE provider and certifies that this activity conforms to the standards for approved education activities prescribed by the rules and regulations of the State Bar of California governing MCLE. The OCBA reserves the right to substitute speakers. Persons with disabilities: If special arrangements are required, contact OCBA 10 days prior to program. 4350878