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# CITATIONS

J U N E - T W O T H O U S A N D S E V E N

## Like Father, Like Son

*By Michael A. Velthoen*



JONATHAN FRASER LIGHT

SVETLANA A. KALGANOVA

GREG T. MAY

VERNA R. KAGAN

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Jonathan Fraser Light*

I sit here at my regular perch at Starbucks in Camarillo on a Wednesday morning, dressed in business casual, trailing on four hours' notice for what is projected to be at least a three-week jury trial with 35 witnesses in something other than my usual employment law defense matter (messy case, to say the least). I am poised to rush home and put a tie on and load my car with two trees' worth of paper. Thankfully, it is not a toxic tort case, or an entire forest might be used. When I worked on the Oxnard Dunes toxic waste litigation in the late 80's and early 90's, we had over a million documents and, at one point, 19 insurance carriers funding our defense (some based on coverage from the 50's—save those policies!). We spent over three months just doing motions in Limine and a mini-trial on an expert issue with Judge Melinda Johnson presiding. We multiple defense counsel kept a log of all the pithy remarks by counsel and Her Honor, by category, and I circulated a copy at the end of the case. My favorite was from the young plaintiffs' attorney who kept calling the defense counsel "disingenuous," except she kept pronouncing it "disingenius." We may not have been geniuses, but we knew how to kill trees.

Perhaps there is a better way to handle litigation. With rare exceptions, mediation and binding arbitration are my preferred routes to resolution. I know the plaintiffs' employment bar almost uniformly hates arbitration, however. For a garden variety business case, I think it is a fine way to keep the civil backlog down. It gives us a date certain for all the parties and witnesses, and makes it easier to focus on preparation knowing that it is a hard deadline.

Opposing counsel approached me in the Simi Valley Starbucks (do you see a pattern here?) near the courthouse on Monday morning before the first trial call, and jokingly asked me if I was working on my opening statement. Clicking out of my baseball stats, I told him I was working diligently to beat him into a pulp. We have gotten along well in the case and hopefully by the time you read this I will have succeeded in the pulp-rendering. We agreed that the preparation for trial is horrendous, and he then commented that the actual trial is "fun." I can't say that trials are in most any way fun, with the potential for witnesses to come late or disappear, juror hidden bias, evidence that

is disallowed or otherwise doesn't come in the manner planned, and the regular 3 a.m. internal brainstorming as I toss and turn. Or the witness who, in prep (thankfully), or on the witness stand (horrors!) says something unanticipated that would have been nice to know early on in the case. Now we have the dreaded equipment breakdowns with ELMO, computers and PowerPoint, etc. Some courtrooms are set up well for electronics, others are woefully inadequate, particularly with the size of the screen available and other logistics for use of all the fancy equipment. During deposition review for cross exam, I am sure others have had my experience of rereading the key testimony and wishing I had asked a tighter question, or the answer is not quite how I had remembered it. One Santa Barbara judge several years ago refused to allow me to put up a chronology during my well-oiled opening statement: "But I'm just trying to tell the story here, your Honor." "There aren't going to be any stories told in my courtroom," he replied.

I also have a less-than-euphoric response to victory that I think is experienced by my brethren in the plaintiffs' bar. My reaction is usually, "Phew, we didn't lose." My clients always express their gratitude, but don't exactly feel like winners when they note that they have just had to pay me an exorbitant amount of money to vindicate their position.

I have been "unhired" a couple of times for discussing settlement possibilities too early

and too often with determined clients. After meeting with one regular client who had been sued, and being vetted by his attorney brother the tax lawyer (HATE that scenario), and being told that they were going to use another lawyer, I gracefully said, "my prediction is that you will spend approximately \$20,000 in legal fees and then settle for between \$20-\$25,000." Six months later I received a call from the client: "I don't mean to blow smoke at you (he was a bit more pointed in the description), but we spent \$23,000 in legal fees and settled the case for \$20,000. I'll listen to you next time."

We recently had a client who refused to settle a case that I could have resolved for \$12,000. The client insisted on going to trial and paid every dime of a \$144,000 legal fee that included a two-week jury trial. Happily for me, the client wanted my partner to try the case after they had bonded during the discovery process. After our successful defense verdict, the client insisted that he had learned his lesson and would listen to our advice regarding settlement early on. Three weeks ago he was sued again. Given that we appear to have a strong case, at least at the outset, we have been ordered to move forward again. We'll see if he listens this time. I hope so, for his sake, and for the trees.

*Jon Light can be found at most any Starbucks in the County, and before broadband he kept a list in his car of every Starbucks in California.*

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# OLYMPIC LAWYER

By Svetlana Kalganova



From *Tashkent To Ventura* in CITATIONS' March issue revealed my involvement in the noble sport of fencing. I have since learned that I am not the only lawyer in Ventura County who enjoys

occasional foil fighting and appreciates the beauty of this gracious sport, which once was a must-have skill of aristocrats. Steven Renshaw, a former federal prosecutor, is a two-time U.S. Olympic Fencing Team member who enjoys sharing his fencing skills and experience with the next generation. Steve has recently started his own practice, Renshaw & Associates, which focuses primarily on business and environmental litigation. I had a chance to interview Steve for CITATIONS and discovered that under the brave demeanor of a successful litigator beats the heart of a romantic man and devoted husband, who, after traveling far and wide, found his love in Ventura.

**Steve, tell me a little about yourself. Were you born and raised in California?**

I have led a well-traveled life. I am originally from St. Louis, Missouri, but I lived in several different areas of the country as a youngster. After I graduated from college, I took a job with the U.S. State Department and lived in Poland for 18 months.

**What brought you to Ventura?**

I met my beautiful and incredibly intelligent wife, Christine, in an international tax class while in the LLM tax program at Loyola Law School. Although she was living in Santa Barbara and working for Ambrecht, Arnold, Tokuyama & Brittain, LLP, in Montecito, she had recently bought a place here in Ventura . . . so here is where we ended up.

**Where did you go to school?**

I attended college at Clemson University in South Carolina and graduated with degrees in both political science and business, with a minor in accounting. I attended law school at the University of Notre Dame and received my LLM in Tax from Loyola University.

**While in school, were you a member of any fraternity? Sports team?**

At Clemson, I was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon and the university fencing and soccer teams.

**Have you always wanted to be a lawyer?**

I can't say I always wanted to be a lawyer, but I know that it was one of my goals by the time I finished my first year of college. I don't know if it was as a result of watching so many "Perry Mason" episodes as a child, but there was something about the courtroom that always intrigued me. I knew that I wanted to be a prosecutor.

**Was law school everything you expected?**

My law school experience was a wonderful, if hectic, time. I loved being at Notre Dame and would highly recommend it for anyone. I made many close friends during my time there and have always cherished those memories. My law school experience was a bit different than most. While I was in school, I was also busy coaching the university's men's and women's fencing team and training for the 1984 Olympics. I am proud to say that both the men's and women's fencing teams won national championships.

**Did you practice law before entering the LLM in Taxation program?**

I had been practicing for almost 18 years as a trial attorney before I decided to expand my horizons and get my LLM.

**Why did you decide to get your LLM in Tax? This is certainly one of the most difficult of all LLM programs. I know, because I went through it myself.**

I'm a glutton for knowledge. I have always enjoyed being a trial attorney, but it occurred to me as a way to expand my knowledge and perhaps broaden my practice area. Going back to get my LLM was probably the smartest – or luckiest – move I ever made, for reasons unrelated to law. While I was in the LLM program, I met the love of my life, my wife Christine, who takes great pleasure in reminding me that while I have my LLM, I am still a litigator.

**How did your experience as a fencing competitor help you with your studies?**

My fencing experience has given me a sense of confidence, self-discipline and the recognition that success comes from preparation. Of course, it was always great exercise and a stress reliever.

**What was it like to be a member of the U.S. Olympic team?**

Being a member of the U.S. Olympic team was an experience like no other. The people I met in my travels, and the things I saw and experienced, are memories that will always be among my most treasured.



**Which do you like better – being an athlete or a coach?**

That's an excellent question. There is a sense of accomplishment in watching someone else succeed or enjoy him- or herself as a result of what you have imparted to them. I have enjoyed both experiences, but I truly enjoy watching others apply what I have taught them.

**You recently opened a private law practice, Renshaw & Associates. Tell me a little about it. What is your main area of practice?**

I'm continuing my business and environmental litigation practice, but I'm also making use of my LLM in tax by expanding my practice to include trust and probate litigation and international tax issues.

**What made you decide to leave the corporate world and open a private practice?**

It's something I had talked about for quite some time and since I wasn't getting any younger, I decided that if I was going to do it, I should do it now. Christine has been incredibly supportive of my decision.

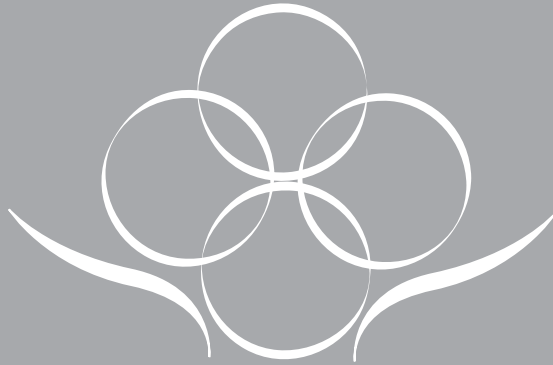
**What are your "guilty" pleasures? You know, those things that help you get through the day.**

Wow, guilty pleasures, hmm? Listening to my St. Louis Cardinals on my XM radio during baseball season, working out every day, an occasional slice of chocolate cake – and my family.



*Svetlana Kalganova is an associate at Myers Widders Gibson Jones & Schneider in Ventura.*

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# Like Father, Like Son

By Michael Velthoen

In the second part of our series on multi-generational lawyers, Citations recently caught up with two pairs of father-son attorney teams.



## Lindsay & Stuart Nielson

Stuart Nielson recently joined his father Lindsay at his Ventura practice. Stuart came from Hatch & Parent in Santa Barbara. Previously, he was an associate with Latham & Watkins in Los Angeles. Stuart lives with his wife, Maria, in Ventura.

**CITATIONS:** *How did your dad's career affect your decision to become a lawyer?*

**STUART:** I remember going around town with my dad when I was a kid. He seemed to know everybody. He was always shaking hands. It really seemed like he was doing something important. I also felt like he was really helping people and helping the community. That really appealed to me.

**CITATIONS:** *Did you always know you wanted to be an attorney?*

**STUART:** I think my dad knew the trap he set when he let me be an English major in college. I wanted to be an English professor, but I didn't want to move to Wisconsin to make \$20,000 a year. So it was either wait tables or go to law school. It was not something that I have always wanted to do, but I discovered that I really enjoyed law school. And I have enjoyed the practice of law quite a bit. So it's worked out well.

**LINDSAY:** I believe the law is a terrific profession. It's an intellectual profession. But I did not want to pressure Stuart in any way. When he asked for advice about law school, I thought it might be better if he heard it from somebody else. So I asked Bill Peck to take

Stuart to lunch to talk about what it is like to be a lawyer. I think that made more of an impact than anything I could tell him.

**CITATIONS:** *Did you know that you eventually wanted to come back to Ventura?*

**STUART:** No. I knew when I took the job at Latham that it would be temporary. But I did not think I would wind up working with my dad. After working in larger firms, I learned that working in a smaller firm would fit me better. I like having control over things. When I was ready to make a jump to a smaller firm, working for my dad just made sense. I knew that he would have my best interests at heart in making decisions about the firm and the practice.

**LINDSAY:** Maybe that is genetic. My first job out of school was to work for UCLA - with thousands of other employees. I kept progressively moving to smaller firms until I started my own. I wanted the control. Large organizations have no appeal to me.

**CITATIONS:** *Did you have any concerns about mixing family with business?*

**STUART:** Not really. I don't think I was ready to do it out of law school. It wasn't the right time then. But with the experience I've had, it was a no-brainer to decide to go work with my dad. I trust him entirely and I was very comfortable with the environment. I grew up watching my dad run his own business and I knew I would be comfortable with his style.

**CITATIONS:** *Have you tried to provide any guidance to Stuart as a lawyer?*

**LINDSAY:** My philosophy has always been to solve problems. I like to get to the bottom line. It's not a matter of making money for yourself, but helping your client. If you do right by your client, you will do right by yourself. With all of the associates that have worked for me over the years, I have tried to instill this philosophy. I am doing the same with Stuart, but he already knows it.

**STUART:** I have the same basic philosophy as my dad. I really enjoy walking into his office and bouncing ideas or strategies off of him. By nature, I am a deal-maker, problem-solver type of lawyer. My dad has taught me that you can have that type of attitude and still be an effective litigator.

**CITATIONS:** *How has the office changed since Stuart started working for you?*

**LINDSAY:** Well, the skill level has certainly improved. We have a good working relationship. I'm pretty good at setting the strategy and figuring out where we need to go. Stuart's very good at finding the law to make that happen. I still bring the clients in, but I typically bring him in on the ground floor with the clients so that he can take it from there if need be. Stuart is also bringing our office into the twenty-first century. He is helping to introduce me to the digital age.

**CITATIONS:** *How has being Lindsay's son affected your interaction with the local legal community?*

**STUART:** Most people believe that my dad is a reasonable guy. So when they meet me, they assume that I am a reasonable guy. It's not much different than walking in the room with Latham & Watkins on your card. People assume you are a certain kind of lawyer when you work for Latham. People assume I am a certain kind of lawyer because of my father.

**CITATIONS:** *How have you handled compensation?*

**STUART:** Call me off the record. Seriously, I'm looking at this long term. I was able to buy a house, which is no small feat in Ventura.

**LINDSAY:** I never tell him that he has to get his billable hours up.

## Tony & Michael Strauss



Michael Strauss joined his father Tony at the recently renamed Strauss Law Group in Ventura. He and his wife Jenna graduated from Wake Forest Law School in 2006. Jenna is an associate at Nordman, Cormany, Hair & Compton in Oxnard. They live in Ventura.



**CITATIONS:** *When you were growing up, did you always want to be a lawyer?*

**MICHAEL:** Not really. I always knew that it would be a good profession if I wanted to go in that direction. I've been around lawyers my whole life. Many of my parents' friends are lawyers – Steve Mitnick, Don Hurley, Larry Matheny, Dan Palay, to name a few. I have always liked and respected them. I had a lot of good role models. But I did not always know that I wanted to be a lawyer. I wasn't sure if I wanted to follow in my dad's footsteps. Those are big shoes to fill. I thought that I might want to be a teacher. I came back to Ventura after college and taught at Lincoln Elementary School for a year. I realized that teaching is a very tough profession. Law seemed much more appealing after that.

**CITATIONS:** *Did you encourage Michael to become a lawyer?*

**TONY:** I was really neutral. I did not want to push him in any direction. I really thought he was going towards engineering or the sciences when he was growing up. In the back of mind, I thought the law might be a possibility for him, but I wanted him to make that decision. I guess the first signal I got that he might be interested in the law was when he became a history major at Berkeley.

**CITATIONS:** *Did you ever ask your dad if you should go to law school?*

**MICHAEL:** No. I really didn't need to ask him. I could always tell that my dad liked practicing law. He really enjoyed it. We're very similar, so I knew it would be a good fit for me, too. I just told him that I was applying to law school. I knew he'd probably be happy about that.

**CITATIONS:** *You went to law school in North Carolina. How did you decide to come back to Ventura?*

**MICHAEL:** My wife lived in a small town in upstate New York. She spent her whole life wanting to get out of a small town. So it was a bit of a tough sell to get her to Ventura, but she really wanted to be around family. It's also pretty difficult to beat California. We looked up and down the coast for a place to settle. San Francisco was too cold and Los Angeles was too crowded. Ventura seemed just about right.

**CITATIONS:** *How did you decide to join your dad's firm?*

**MICHAEL:** My wife and I were both looking for jobs in the area at the same time. I didn't want to compete with her. My priority was to help get her a job that she liked and then I would focus on my job. She got the job at Nordman. Once that was set, I started thinking about where I would work. I worked at the District Attorney's office here last summer. I thought that I might be interested in that route. But I was more interested in the civil arena. At first, I did not think I would go to work with my dad. But then I realized that other firms might be reluctant to hire me out of concern that I might leave after a few years to join my dad.

**CITATIONS:** *Did you approach your dad or did he approach you about working with him?*

**MICHAEL:** I don't know. It was pretty clear that it was always an option if I wanted it. We really didn't have a specific conversation about it.

**TONY:** I am still really in a state of awe that Mike is working for me. It was nothing that was really in my game plan. It just sort of happened.

**CITATIONS:** *Did you have any reservations about it?*

**MICHAEL:** Yes. I did not want to be in his shadow. I did not want people to think that things were handed to me. But it's actually been a real blessing to work with him. People have been very open to me because I am his son. They know him so they feel they know me. I've been able to do things that I would not have been able to do at other places.

**TONY:** I always knew that we would get along just fine. But I always thought that he would work for another firm so he could see what that was like and that he could establish himself on his own. As it came down to decision time, that became less and less a concern. He is not a wallflower and I knew that he would get out there and make a name for himself and that he would not be in my shadow for very long. I also knew that there were other attorneys at our firm and that I would not be the only one to mentor him. That made me feel confident that he would succeed here.

**MICHAEL:** I've definitely tried to do my own thing here. I have my own ideas about what practice areas I want to pursue. I have my own ideas about where the firm should go. I have my own ideas about how to run the firm from a business perspective.

**CITATIONS:** *How has it worked with the other attorneys and staff at the office?*

**TONY:** Michael has worked on and off at the office since he was about fifteen. So it's not like he is a new face. Anybody who has worked at the office for any period of time already knew him. His presence was not new.

**MICHAEL:** I hung out at the office quite a bit when I was young. I answered the phones, I did filing. I've done just about everything there. Now I'm a lawyer there.

**CITATIONS:** *Have you noticed any generational issues?*

**MICHAEL:** I am a bit more tech-savvy. I am trying to take us into the digital age. Our files are kept in these big buckets that are difficult to carry around. If you want something from the file, it takes effort. I am trying to implement a new digital filing system so that everything is on the computer. You don't have to track down the bucket to get what you want.

**CITATIONS:** *How is it different having your son work in the office?*

**TONY:** Other than the fact that I grab him around the neck once in a while, he's treated like a junior associate. He is on the bottom of the totem pole. At the same time, I do have this feeling that Michael really has my back. He's going to have to support me when I get old, so I figure that he has the incentive to make sure that things go well. It's been fun working together.



*Michael Velthoen is a partner at Ferguson Case Orr Paterson and a member of CITATIONS' editorial board.*

## Judicial Council Adopts New Rules for Simple Civil Collection Cases


In a major new decision in administrative policy adopted by the California Judicial Council, changes in the way simple civil collection matters are handled in court will save much wasted time in useless and needless appearances, reducing the public cost of such cases and increasing the efficiencies of the courts.

Under the new rules effective July 1, 2007, collection cases valued at not more than \$25,000 arising from a transaction in which property, services, or money were acquired on credit from a business or person will become categorized separately and handled more efficiently.

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## HOLLY G. SPEVAK



**H**olly Spevak, a beloved professor of law at the Ventura College of Law, and a mediator and board member of the Ventura Center for Dispute Settlement, passed away May 9. Friends may post comments about Holly in the guestbook section of her website, [www.spevaklaw.com](http://www.spevaklaw.com). An obituary appeared in the Ventura County Star May 17th. A memorial fund has been established in Holly's memory: Holly Spevak Memorial Fund, 1200 Paseo Camarillo, Suite 170-B, Camarillo, California 93010. Please see July CITATIONS for more about Holly.

## CIVILITY GUIDELINES

**O**n May 11, the State Bar authorized release of proposed "California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism" for a 30-day public comment period that ends on June 12, 2007. There are two versions of the proposed Guidelines. A 14-page version contains the entire set of guidelines, which consists of an introduction, 21 Sections with examples, and a voluntary attorney pledge at the end. The second version condenses the guidelines into 2 pages without the introduction and the examples. To view the proposals, go to [www.calbar.ca.gov](http://www.calbar.ca.gov). Click on the "Public Comment" heading on the left side and scroll down to the Guidelines.

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*Legal Malpractice Insurance Crisis*

**1990** • Preferred Policyholder and Longevity Credits inaugurated

**1991** • New Admittee Program introduced

**1998** • Return of Contribution to Surplus approved by Board of Directors

**1999** • Criminal and Insurance Defense Programs introduced

**2000** • Appellate, Immigration, Mediation and Arbitration Programs added

**2001** • LMIC flourishes in spite of yet another *Legal Malpractice Insurance Crisis*  
• Strong Start Program (formerly New Admittee) reintroduced

**2003** • Online MCLE offered

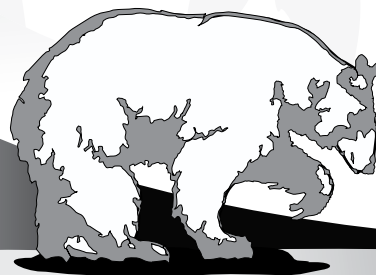
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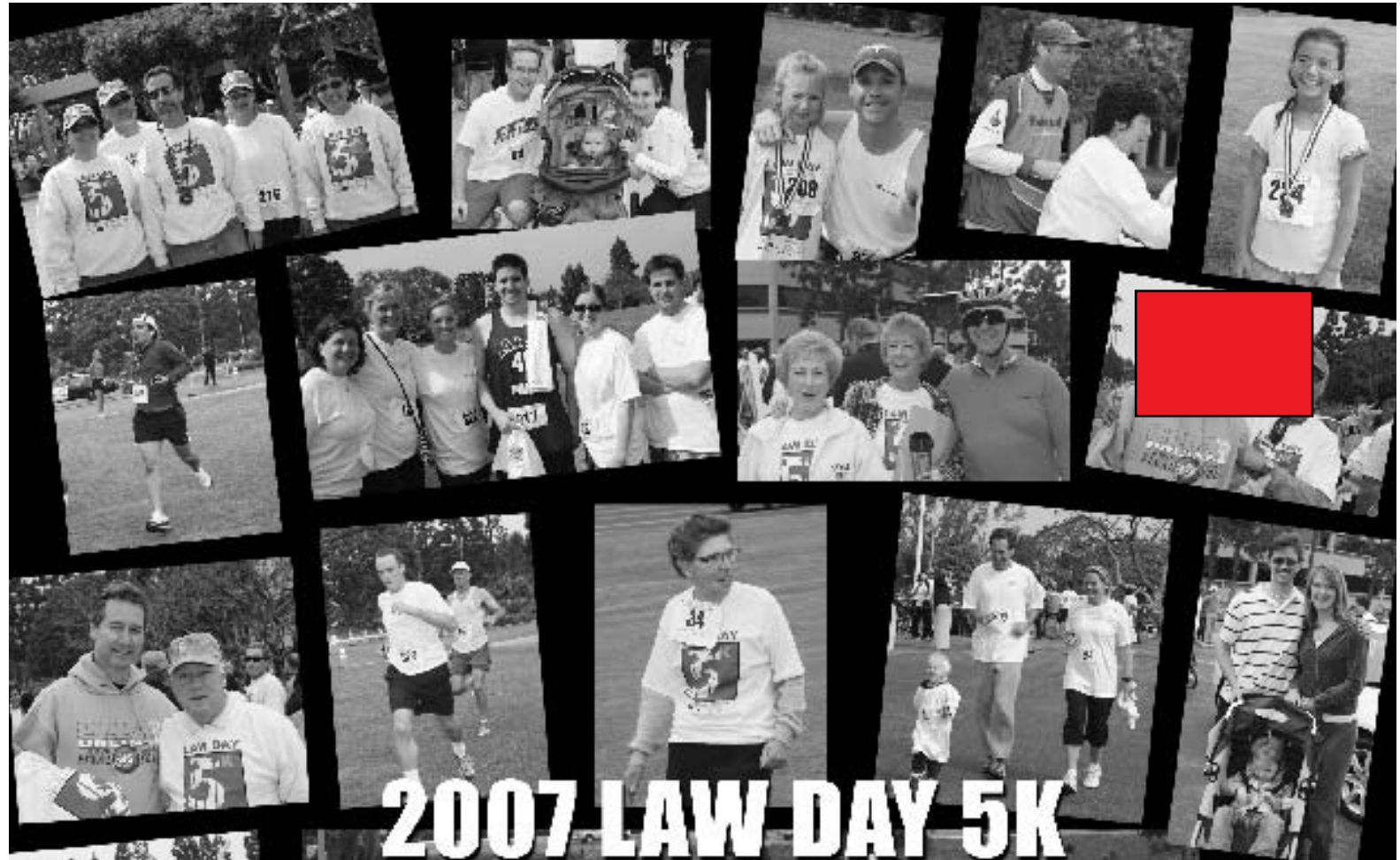
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## IN MEMORIAM: KEITH M. CARTER

By Greg May

The Ventura County legal community and the community at large lost a valued member when Keith Carter died on April 25. His friends and colleagues, Bart Bleuel and Dick Hanawalt, knew Keith for over 30 years.

Bleuel and Hanawalt both served with Keith for many years in the Kiwanis Club of Ventura. They recalled Keith – affectionately – as “having a talent for being disruptive.” What lingers in their memories is Keith’s passion for service. Bleuel first met Keith while Keith was serving as a volunteer for a county-sponsored legal services clinic sponsored by the county. Both remember Keith as having a “heart of gold,” always first in line for service projects, a member of other service organizations, and having a special fondness for projects involving children and schools. He was also a gracious host, opening his home to the Kiwanis for an annual barbeque.

Keith and Hanawalt first met and crossed professional paths when they had adjacent offices across the street from the then-new courthouse complex. Sharing military experience and a sense of humor, they bonded well, frequently filled in for each other, and respected each other’s talents. Hanawalt remembers Keith as something of a technical pioneer, one of the first lawyers in the area to have a website.

Keith saw trying times in his later years, as he struggled with a failing voice. Few of us will face such daunting physical obstacles to our practices. Keith continued to provide excellent representation even through that struggle. He will be remembered as a thoughtful, creative and excellent advocate with a sharp wit.

Despite his service and outgoing nature and well-earned professional respect, Keith remained something of an enigma, with interests so varied few could keep up with them all. He was an accomplished Dixieland clarinetist with a band called The Tailgate Eight, but when he died at his piano, many people, even those who knew him closely, discovered for the first time that he even played piano! Add scuba diving and aviation to his list of hobbies, and you start to get just a glimpse of his interests.

I never met Keith Carter. My loss.

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# PRO BONO HIGHLIGHTS

By Verna R. Kagan

Recently I was required by virtue of my age to take a written examination in order to renew my driver's license.

I arrived at the DMV office at the appropriate hour and jumped through the customary hoops – one window for eye test, next window for picture and thumb print, next window for signature on documents, and finally I was handed my test.

When my test was scored, I was marked incorrect on one question and so naturally, I passed. But after I got home I was curious. I reread the question and choice of responses and then consulted my D.M.V. pamphlet.

Convinced that I had answered the question correctly, I returned to the D.M.V. and pointed out the error. When I presented the matter to the first lady to whom I spoke she was curious as to why I had returned since I had passed the test. I explained that it wasn't for me, but for others who might take the same test, for whom the question might make the difference between pass or fail.

With a very astonished expression on her face she asked, "You came here because of other people? Why would you care?" I then proudly explained that I was an attorney and that I spend my days dealing with other people's concerns. She referred me on to the supervisor.

With the supervisor, it took three stabs at explanation before she acknowledged that I was quite correct. Had you failed the test, she said, I would have given you credit for that one. Again I had to explain that throughout the state of California, people were being marked down on that question. She finally agreed to send the matter to headquarters.

What I did that day was small potatoes in the larger scheme of things. But I walked away proud to belong to a profession of people who care about people. That certainly is no more exemplified than by all of you, my colleagues, who give so generously of your time to our *pro bono* applicants. We should also be proud of the men and woman who come into the Bar Office week after week to give their time and energy to the program. Last, but not least, we should be proud of our executive board and advisory committee who continually make sure that we receive the support and encouragement we need.

What a wonderful day I had after all.

*Verna Kagan is the VLSP Senior Emeritus Attorney.*

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## EAR TO THE WALL

Greg May has launched a weblog (or "blog"), "The California Blog of Appeal." Co-extensive with his practice at G. T. May Law Offices in Ventura in appeals, writs and post-trial motions, the California Blog of Appeal will cover procedural law relating to the prosecution of appeals, writ petitions, and post-trial motions, practical skills for appellate practice, and significant developments in substantive law in the California Courts of Appeal, California Supreme Court, and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The URL for the California Blog of Appeal is <http://www.calblogofappeal.com>.

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As you are painfully aware, two bar pals died within 18 days of one another. **Keith Carter**, a bar supporter and gadfly since I arrived nearly 17 years ago, struggled for many years with lupus. At first, I just thought he threw a few back during dinner meetings. Later, Keith told me bench officers refused to allow him to appear because he no longer spoke coherently. All his new clients were told that he could not represent them in court. Devastated by a dozen prescriptions, Keith trudged forward and I admired him for that. Read **Bart Bleuel's** quote about Keith on page 17. Bart hit a homer with that one (and that is intended as a compliment). **Holly Spevak** was the newer kid in town. Joined our bar in January 2000 and jumped in headfirst with family law, collaborative family law and the Inn of Court. I don't recall ever hearing her complain about the predicament she found herself in. If she wasn't feeling well, her husband, Beau, would attend an event with her to support. She may or may not have been wearing her scarf and really did not seem to care. We spoke frequently about her son, Matt, his interest in the law, and her teaching assignments at the Ventura College of Law. Holly personified the profession. Early scuttlebutt has the local Inn of Court Chapter honoring her with a scholarship in her name...

**James Sherren** had a "Letter to the Editor" in the May issue of the *California Bar Journal*. Find it at [www.calbar.org](http://www.calbar.org) and click in the search area, California Bar Journal...Got \$3,500? The New York Times, through Bauman Rare Books, offers *The Common Law*, by Oliver Wendell Holmes. This is a first edition, written in 1881...From *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*: "Peter Carey won the Booker Prize in 2001 for a book that contained no commas at all (*True History of the Kelly Gang*). Meanwhile, lawyers eschew the comma as far as possible, regarding it as a troublemaker"... You read

## EXEC'S DOT...DOT...DOT...

By Steve Henderson, Executive Director, M.A., CAE

about the donkey appearing in court in Fort Worth, Texas? "Walked to the bench and stared at the jury, the picture of a gentle, well mannered creature and not the loud aggressive animal he had been accused of being." [www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18193841](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18193841)... **Greg May's** new appellate blog can be found at <http://calblogofappeal.wordpress.com/> and he's anxious to hear from you...

Appreciated *The President's Corner*, by Family Law President, **Sandra Bolker**, in the May edition of the Family Law Bar Newsletter. She quoted Aristotle: "Mothers are fonder than fathers of their children because they are more certain they are their own."...John Edwards, the North Carolina Democrat who is seeking his party's presidential nomination in 2008, told reporters he was "embarrassed" over the disclosure that he had paid \$800 for two haircuts in California in April. Embarrassed is all he could think of?...The newly constituted and renamed **Strauss Law Group** had its inaugural party in its office on April 28 to coincide with the Ventura Art Walk. In addition to firm members **Aletheia Gooden, Bruce Cray, and Tony and Mike Strauss**, other legal notables making an appearance included (but may have not been limited to) **Jenna Strauss, Steve Mitnick, Larry Matheny, Bob Bartosh, Erik Feingold, Mark Zirbel, Trevor Quirk, Gabriella Navarro-Busch, Mike Velthoen, Matt Lavere, Wendy Lascher, Angela Lopez, Dan Murphy, Mary Calkins, Joe Chrisman, and Al Vargas**...

From Anonymous: "If I had but one life to give for my country, it would be a lawyer's."...The heroic status of Aldus Manutius the Elder (1450-1515) among historians of the printed word cannot be overstated. Who invented the italic typeface? Who printed the first semicolon? Aldus was the man...From Gerry Spence: "The function of the law is not to provide justice or to preserve freedom. The function of the law is to keep those who hold power, in power."...This one has been around for a month or so (that's a BIG problem with a monthly magazine) but still feel the need to have you play along. Go to Google Maps and start in New York and end in Paris, France. Check out step #24...**Kathryn Pietrolungo** found this beauty: "It requires no analysis to conclude that cannibalism of any kind is

against public policy." *Tourtelot v. Koshick*, 12 Fla. L. Weekly Supp. 1008a (Fla. 6th Cir. 2005)...

From René Descartes: "A state is better governed which has few laws, and those laws strictly observed."...Who won the Sullivan Award (amateur athlete of the year) this year? Florida basketball player Joakim Noah? Candace Parker, uncanny roundballer from Tennessee? Nope, Jessica Long, a disabled high school swimmer from Maryland...Great photo in the NY Times ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) 4.15.07) of Katherine Switzer being pushed off the Boston Marathon course by several "officials" during the 1976 race. No ladies allowed in those days...East County Bar Association board member **Roberta Burnette** authored the MCLA Self-Study, "*Hot Button Issues in the Workplace*" in the May issue of *The California Bar Journal*...A girl in New Jersey sued for the right to be valedictorian. The girl was allowed to be home-schooled for "unspecified disabilities." As a result of the absence of distractions, she graduated with a GPA of .055 higher than the nearest student. For a variety of reasons, the superintendent wanted to name the two students co-valedictorians. This sparked a \$2.7 million lawsuit from the girl, which made her no friends in her small town. She ended up rejected by her peers and rejected by Harvard, which had initially admitted her... License Plate of the Month: SUSTAIN on the behind of a 2005 Lotus driven by retired **Judge Joe Hadden**...

*Steve Henderson has been the executive director and chief executive officer of the bar association and its affiliated organizations since November 1990. His address is [steve@vcba.org](mailto:steve@vcba.org) and he welcomes your suggestions and comments unless they pertain to the 2007-2008 Legal Services Directory. Remember to take advantage of the bar's reconfigured website at [www.vcba.org](http://www.vcba.org).*

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