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# CITATIONS

DECEMBER - TWO THOUSAND NINETEEN

FAMILY LAW  
STATE OF THE COURTS

2019

*by Claudia Silverman*  
Page 8



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<b>PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CALIFORNIA'S END OF LIFE OPTION ACT</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>REMOVAL, REMAND, APPEAL - OH MY!</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HAVE YOU HEARD?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, BE OF SERVICE, PRACTICE GRATITUDE</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>BARRISTERS' CORNER</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>CLASSIFIEDS</b>	<b>23</b>

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Douglas K. Goldwater

After what felt like a blink of an eye, 2019 is coming to a close. With this being my final message, I wanted to express how truly honored I have felt to have served this year as the President of this organization of fine lawyers. One of the rules in Boy Scouts is to always leave a campground in a better condition than you found it. Consistent with that concept, I believe that I have left our Bar Association in a better place than it was, and I am confident that the next Presidents in line – **Kathryn Clunen, Marc Anderson, and Jacquelyn Ruffin** – will continue the improvements. As I have said before, our Bar Association is going to be in very good hands.

The month of December, of course, evokes thoughts of the holidays and children enjoying them. In deciding what to write about for my final article, these thoughts led me to reflect about my children. My wife and I have twin boys. I will always remember being at the first ultrasound appointment and hearing the doctor confirm that there were two babies in utero. My wife saw the vacant look on my face and asked me what I was thinking. I sheepishly admitted that my mind immediately raced to the financial impact of buying two cars for them in their late teens, paying for two college tuitions at the same time, and other such substantial expenditures. Rather than assure me that we will be able to figure all of that out, my wife doubled down on my anxieties, by saying: “Back up a bit, buddy, and think about two car seats, two cribs, two strollers, two high chairs, etc.” Yikes!

When you tell people that you have twins, the typical response is, “You got two for the price of one.” Oh no, my friend, that is not a true statement. Having twins is like getting “two for the price of two.” Putting finances aside, it is a parenting experience like no other. Having studied the “nature versus nurture” debate in the past, I was firmly entrenched in the “nurture” camp that believed that people are who they are largely due to their environment and how

they were raised. That is, however, until we had our twins.

Our boys have grown up in the same house, with the same rules, the same affection, and the same discipline, all at the same time. Despite the same nurturing, they could not be more different. One is an athlete, the other is an artist. One is anxious, the other is laid back. One is outgoing, the other is shy and self-conscious. The list of differences goes on and on. Seeing how these two boys are like night and day despite all of the sameness in their environment has altered my thoughts on the “nature versus nurture” argument. While I still believe that nurture is important, seeing how my two boys have developed, I now firmly believe that their “hard-wiring” is the driving force.

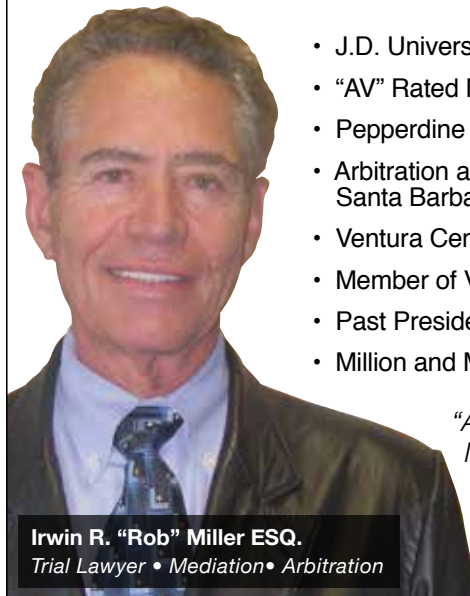
Irrespective of whether you believe that it is nature, nurture, or some combination of the two that makes people the way that they are, the most important thing that we can do is try to understand each other. People may have certain beliefs, behaviors or orientations due to nature or nurture. Regardless, that is who they are and what makes them unique. Just as I greatly enjoy having two very different experiences with my two very dissimilar twin boys, we should soak up the opportunities to learn from the differences in those around us.

*Douglas K. Goldwater is a partner at Ferguson Case Orr Paterson, LLP. His practice focuses on family law. He can be reached at (805) 659-6800 or at [dgoldwater@fcoplaw.com](mailto:dgoldwater@fcoplaw.com).*

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# CALIFORNIA'S END OF LIFE OPTION ACT

by Carol Mack

The other day, I was discussing my Advance Directive with my family doctor, and I mentioned that I wanted to keep open the possibility of taking advantage of the End of Life Option Act if circumstances warranted. My doctor, who knows me better than anyone, told me that, while he might support me in that decision, he could not prescribe the required drugs because his practice is now part of Dignity Health, a Catholic organization.

And there it is. The End of Life Option Act, which allows physician-assisted suicide, is now in effect in California but remains controversial. Since the Act itself authorizes health care organizations to prohibit their employee from participating in activities under the law, Catholic organizations can prevent their physicians from participating. Other physicians may choose to participate or not.

The Act was passed at a special legislative session and signed into law in Oct. 2015. It mirrors a similar law in Oregon and was supported by the “death with dignity” movement. The fact that it was passed in a special session was later used as a reason to challenge the law.

Initially, there was some concern whether Governor Brown, a former Jesuit seminary student, would sign the measure. After some reflection, he did. Here is an excerpt from the letter he sent to the state Legislature:

“I do not know what I would do if I were dying in prolonged and excruciating pain. I am certain, however, that it would be a comfort to be able to consider the options afforded by the bill. And I wouldn't deny the right to others.”

The law took effect on June 9, 2016, 90 days after the special session had adjourned. Upon the governor's signatures, California became the fifth state to allow physician-assisted suicide after Oregon, Washington, Montana and Vermont.

There was an immediate failed attempt to repeal the law. Opponents of the law, including the Catholic church, generally point to the value of human life and the inappropriateness of asking physicians to violate the Hippocratic Oath. Proponents, on the other hand, argue in favor of

patients' autonomy and physicians' duty to relieve suffering.

It was inevitable the Act would be challenged in court. A lawsuit to repeal the Act, *Ahn v. Hestrin*, was filed in May 2018. The plaintiffs (the Life Legal Defense Foundation, the American Academy of Medical Ethics, the named plaintiff and five physicians) claim that the Act violates due process and equal protection because it treats terminally ill patients differently from others. They also question the legislature's authority to pass the law during a special session designated for health care funding.

On May 25, 2018, the Riverside County Superior Court ruled that the Act was unconstitutional based on its passage during the special health care session, and the law was suspended. On June 15, 2018, the Fourth District Court of Appeal granted a motion to stay the trial court's ruling pending further hearings, and on Nov. 27, 2018, ruled that the physicians bringing suit lacked standing because they were not harmed. The court did, however, suggest ways that they might establish standing.

In January, the plaintiffs petitioned for a writ of certiorari, but the California Supreme Court denied the petition, leaving the law in effect.

No court has yet ruled on the merits of the case. On July 5, the Riverside County Superior Court granted a motion from Compassion & Choices, an organization supporting end-of-life choices, to intervene in *Ahn v. Hestrin* on behalf of two terminally ill patients, but denied the same motion for a physician who treats terminally ill patients. On Sept. 26, Compassion & Choices demurred, which will be heard on Dec. 17.

So how does the law work? To take advantage of the aid-in-dying prescription drugs, a patient has to be a California resident over the age of 18, and have a terminal diagnosis with a life expectancy of six months or less, which must be verified by two physicians. The patient must then make two oral requests followed by a witnessed written request. If the physician has any questions about the patient's capacity, the physician should make a referral to a mental health specialist.

Other safeguards written into the Act include the provision that only the patient may request the drugs, that the patient must be able to self-administer the lethal dose, and that the patient may always withdraw the request. Undue influence is a felony under the Act.

Health care providers are not obligated to participate in this process. If they do participate, they are protected from liability. Actions taken under the Act “shall not, for any purposes, constitute suicide, assisted suicide, homicide, or elder abuse.” In fact, the patient's death is to be considered a death from the underlying disease.

The Act requires that data be kept on all requests for aid in dying and the outcomes of these requests. According to statistics from 2018, 1108 prescriptions for aid-in-dying drugs have been written since the law took effect, with 807 individuals dying by taking the medications. Most of these patients were older, well-educated, white and had insurance. Indeed, most were receiving hospice or palliative care. This data raises the question of why ethnic minorities and less educated patients have not participated. Research suggests that cultural and religious issues may play a role, and that access may be an issue.

Unless struck down, the Act will remain in effect until Jan. 1, 2026, when it will sunset unless is extended by the Legislature.



**Carol Mack** is newly retired after teaching full time for ten years, and part time for many years before that. She most recently served as Associate Professor of Health Science with Cal State Channel Islands. She recently enjoyed a vegan food tour through Paris.

# FAMILY LAW STATE OF THE COURTS 2019

by Claudia Silverman

Presiding Family Law **Judge William Q. Liebmann** always looks forward to his annual State of the Court address. This year a enthusiastic assembly included **Judge John Smiley**, **Judge JoAnn Johnson**, **Judge Michael Lief** and **Commissioner Judy Rhoades**, as well as judicial court staffers Tamika Smith, Tracy Jones and Monika Azuna, newly appointed Managing Attorney **Alfonzo Martinez**, not to mention lawyers, therapists, mediators, and others.

Judge Liebmann reported:

## Workload

The Judicial Council recently completed a new statewide workload study. Notably, the workload of the Ventura County bench requires seven more judges than we currently have. While the court is twelfth largest in the state, we are fourth in number of filings per judicial position, and fifth in dispositions among all cases, not just in family law. (Family law statistics, interestingly, are not applicable or meaningful, because they track only new cases and cases dismissed or going to judgment, not pre- or post-judgment RFOs.) Ventura County bench officers handle 25 percent more work than the Judicial Council believes is appropriate. Judge Liebmann observed that this is made possible because “we have a good bench and we work hard.”

Ventura County will receive one of the 25 new judge seats allocated by the Legislature in next year’s budget, but that seat is not likely slated for the Family Law division because other divisions have greater need.

## Fiscal Health of the Court

The Court’s fiscal health has gradually improved since the last recession budget and staff cuts. While the Legislature and Governor restored some of our funding in recent years, the court sees no prospect yet of restoring family law hearings at the Simi Valley courthouse.

## Clerk’s Office

Though the filing windows are not at their pre-recession operating times, electronic

filing has largely made the closing time filing rush a thing of the past. Before implementation of electronic filing, the court received about 60 fax filings per month in civil; now there are over 1,400 electronic filings per month. Family law receives about 400 electronic filings per month.

Staff at the filing windows changes periodically. The court has long had a policy of cross-training staff to provide redundancy and back-up when a particular division experiences unexpected workload, and to provide opportunities for staff advancement. The downside is the learning curve as someone learns new skills. If there is a problem at the filing window or elsewhere in the system, Judge Liebmann counseled not to hesitate to speak to a supervisor; if the supervisor is not present, ask to speak to the manager. Supervisors and managers are there to make sure that things are done right and to remedy problems that may arise.

## Family Law Facilitator’s Office

Also known as the Self-Help Center, this office has had a busy year. They have brought on additional staff through an Innovation Grant from the Judicial Council. The Center is now conducting webinars each week about family law proceedings. The webinars are very successful, and the staff attorneys have presented talks on the program at two statewide conferences in the past three months.

In addition, the facilities at the Juvenile Justice Center were remodeled and the hours expanded – the Family Law Facilitator’s office there is now open five days a week. Room 30 is scheduled for a complete overhaul – it was previously the dependency court and has never really been adequate for its present use.

Judge Liebmann applauded the extraordinary volume of assistance provided by this office: as of the date of the presentation, Sept. 17, the Family Law Facilitator’s Office had already served approximately 9000 litigants.

## Family Court Services



Managing Attorney Alfonso Martinez is very approachable and open to your suggestions and concerns.

Court supervisor Vince Morda has retired and been replaced by Brian Adams. For the foreseeable future, Adams will be both supervising the other mediators and also conducting mediations. “He will be busy,” remarked Judge Liebmann appreciatively.



## Staff

Judge Liebmann acknowledged the hard work of the court secretaries, who tirelessly field calls from the “pro pers, attorneys, attorney’s staff, experts, significant others, and officious intermeddlers,” while also scheduling ex partes and preparing and processing orders. The judicial assistants and bailiffs are also crucial to the operation of the court, and work very hard.

## The Bench

Newest on the bench is Commissioner Judy Rhoades, presiding over Courtroom 34. She has been doing a marvelous job carrying the load in the most high-volume courtroom in the Family Law Department.

Judge Michael Lief was introduced to the family law bar about one year ago. His performance over the past year has shown that he is more than up to the task; he has fully demonstrated his grasp of and commitment to the family law assignment.

Judge Liebmann noted that he has known Judge Johnson for many years – “I remember litigating cases against her when some of you were in preschool.” She is truly an all-star.



Judge Smiley “absolutely epitomizes the family law judge. The superlatives do not do him justice. Year after year I struggle to find a way to convey the absolute awe I hold him in and to express the respect and admiration I have for him.”

### Proposed Changes to Local Rules

One of the proposals is to revise Rule 4.05, which governs electronic filing. There will be a number of proposed limitations, including a page limit of 200. This limitation was inspired by an attorney who “lodged” a 2,000-page deposition transcript. Judge Liebmann encourages all to review the Judicial Council website for proposed changes to the California Rules of Court and forms and to make comments if appropriate. “I think we have all had the experience of seeing a new or revised mandatory form and questioning why someone, anyone, thought the change was a good idea. If no one pays attention to proposed changes or gives intelligent input, these things will continue to happen.”

The new rules will take effect Jan. 1, 2020.

### Civility and Professionalism

Noting that there have been no groundbreaking new family law cases or statutes to discuss this year, Judge Liebmann turned his attention to declining civility in our practice. Although the professionalism and cooperation that attorneys show to one another “has been the hallmark of the Ventura County Bar and has distinguished it from some of our nearby counties,” Judge Liebman noted a “slow but accelerating erosion of that ethos.” He expressed dismay at the noticeable increase in the number of personal comments about opposing counsel as well as the number of requests for Family Code section 271 sanctions “due to opposing counsel taking a different view of how the case should proceed. It is not a good trend.”

Judge Liebmann started thinking about this topic while reading **Wendy Lascher’s** article in the September CITATIONS about recognizing the importance of the quality of our lives outside of work. “Remember,” Judge Liebmann said, “you belong to an ancient and honorable profession. You are officers of the court. Please act as such. And if you encounter someone who is not living

up to the principles of the profession – do your absolute best to model fitting behavior rather than responding in kind.”



**Claudia Siverman** is a member of CITATIONS’ editorial board. She is a Family Law Specialist, certified by the California State Bar Board of Legal Specialization. She may be reached at (805) 981-3908.

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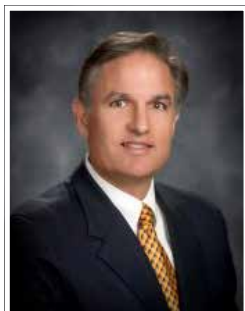


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## REMOVAL, REMAND, APPEAL – OH MY!

by *Randall Delling*

On Oct. 17th I attended my first VCBA continuing education program, “Removal, Remand, Appeal – Oh My!” Yes, the Wizard of Oz did come to mind.

I have attended more than 150 hours of CLE in my two years as a practicing attorney. I give this hour and a half an extremely high rating. I have never practiced in federal court, so there was a lot for me to learn, and this panel delivered. In addition, I feel that the materials made available on [www.strauslawyers.com](http://www.strauslawyers.com) complete the experience and allow a person to take more time with the material than it is possible to stuff in to one hour.

Panel members **Charmaine Buehner**, **Michael Strauss**, and **Lindsey Wagner** extensively practice in federal court. Their knowledge and expertise was readily apparent. The moderator, **Rabiah Rahman**, did a great job of keeping the panel discussion moving, and she was able to ensure that all topics were addressed well.

The CLE was divided into six parts:

pleadings, removal and remand, discovery, motions, appeals and the Supreme Court. Among the many takeaways was that federal rules are consistent among the different federal districts, making practice in federal court easier than in state courts where the local rules can be quite different among geographic locations. All three panel members stressed that a federal practitioner should thoroughly familiarize themselves with all federal rules, the judge’s standing orders, and the local civil rules. The panel also stressed the importance of getting to know the practices and tendencies of the particular judges. For example, the panel shared that in the Northern District of California, federal judges favor plaintiffs. In the Central District, it is likely that federal judges favor defendants.

Among the materials available online is an actual Collective Action Complaint in the Central District Court of California, along with a Petition for Writ of Certiorari to the Supreme Court. As a second-year attorney, whenever I can study and review the work of experienced attorneys, I am appreciative


and learn much from the experience. In this case, the panel’s specific case-related experiences were discussed and are that much more valuable to have in hand as part of the experience.

I want to stress the value of the materials I downloaded. Even though I may never need to write a Rule 26 report, I have an example to learn from should the need arise. The cover sheet, certification and notice of interested parties, and the merit briefs of petitioner and respondent pages are extremely valuable to a new attorney like me, and I believe most of you would find these documents helpful too.



**Randall Delling** practices in Simi Valley. He is a licensed general contractor and former high school teacher, as well as the California State Secondary Principal of the Year for 2010.

As a relatively new solo, Delling is available for a variety of cases at (818) 335-2987 or [randalldelling@outlook.com](mailto:randalldelling@outlook.com).



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# HAVE YOU HEARD?



Edsall Law, APLC, is pleased to announce **Katie B. Sommer** has joined the firm. Sommer graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a minor in Women Studies. She received her Juris Doctor from Whittier Law School in 2005, where she was a member of the Moot Court Honors Board. Sommer previously worked as a Deputy District Attorney for the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office for eleven years, where she worked in numerous different departments, focusing on felony criminal prosecution. She has conducted hundreds of hearings and prosecuted several jury trials. Sommer will be working in the Trust and Estate Litigation Department, as well as advising clients on their various estate planning and business needs. Email *Katie@Edsalllaw.com*; phone (805) 484-9002.



**Wendy Lascher** was named a 2020 Best Lawyer in America for her expertise in appellate law. The Best Lawyers in America recognizes the top five percent of practicing attorneys in the country based entirely on peer review. Lascher is a partner with Ferguson Case Orr Paterson LLP and a co-editor of *CITATIONS*.

The Conejo Free Legal Clinic has received two new grants. One, for \$8,5000, is from the American College of Bankruptcy Foundation to support the Clinic's bankruptcy law services. The second, for \$5,000, is from the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers Foundation to support the Clinic's family law services.



At the Nov. 14 Inns of Court meeting, president **Panda Kroll** announced that Team 5 from the 2018/2019 was peer-awarded the James F. McGahan Memorial Award of Excellence for its presentation. Members of Team 5 pictured from left to right: **Terence Geoghegan, Tim Sottile, Denise Trerotola, Alyse Lazar, Hon. Harry Walsh**. Not pictured: **Julie Taylor** and **Daniel Taylor**.

**ATTENTION:** The statute of limitations on some claims related to the thomas fire runs in early December. Assess whether the statute will preclude later filing of your clients' claims, and file ASAP to ensure claims are preserved.



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# ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, BE OF SERVICE, PRACTICE GRATITUDE

by Theresa Loss

Women Lawyers of Ventura County's (WLVC) annual scholarship dinner and fundraiser started with wine, beer, sumptuous appetizers and a silent auction, but the real purpose was to honor deserving women law students who have demonstrated their dedication to community service and women lawyers who have made a significant impact in the legal community.

This year WLVC awarded Mary Sullivan Scholarships to **Mollie Ruble**, a Ventura College of Law student who has worked for ten years as a Ventura County probation officer. Currently working full time, going to law school and raising a son, Ruble plans to go into family law with a focus on parental rights, domestic violence issues and adoptions.

Because there were so many well-qualified applicants this year, the Board decided to honor a second individual whose dedication to the Latinx community has inspired many young women. **Amisha DeYoung-Dominguez** is an inspiring advocate who has worked for a number of community-oriented groups, including ELLA, "Empowering Latina Leaders into Action." She helps educate undocumented students on their legal status and worked on a report on women's homelessness in Santa Clara County. Amisha has also traveled abroad to work with the InterAmerican Court of Human Rights in Costa Rica. After graduating, DeYoung-Dominguez plans to provide legal services for those in need through her current employer, California Rural Legal Assistance in Oxnard.

After dinner and dessert, WLVC vice-president **Jacquelyn Ruffin** and president **Jaclyn Smith** introduced the two winners of the Holly Spevak Award, which honors members of the legal community who have increased access to justice through pro bono legal services, **Karen Oakman**, and the evening's keynote speaker, **Judge Melinda Johnson (ret.)**.

Since 2015, Oakman has been an Adjunct Professor of Criminal Law and Procedure at California Lutheran University, where she also serves as the university's Pre-Law Coordinator. She is a board member and

active participant in the Conejo Free Clinic, which offers free medical, dental and legal services to low-income residents of Ventura County. Oakman devotedly works one-on-one with clients, recruits new lawyers for the Clinic's all-volunteer legal team, raises the program's profile and awareness within the legal community and advances critically needed, rarely available free legal services for the underserved in Ventura County. She does all this while maintaining her own family law and criminal defense practice at the Dion Law Group and raising two toddlers. Oakman's compassionate, kind and generous spirit exemplifies the best in what attorneys can offer.

Judge Johnson's inspiring speech and sage advice was followed up by a well-deserved standing ovation. With her permission, some excerpts:



I have watched this group grow from an informal cadre of half a dozen of us who could all fit around a table at The Sportsman's Lounge for an irregular lunch meeting (actually more like a support group) to this full-throated advocacy and education group, that sponsors, through it scholarships, younger woman working their way toward their goals. It's been brilliant.

I've looked at the description to be nominated for the award, to see if I'm really qualified as a 'Pioneer.' I guess I qualify [since] I was the first woman appointed to the municipal and superior courts in Ventura County ... and was the youngest person ever appointed to the superior court bench in California after the ten-year rule came into effect.

Then there's the political and social activist component of the award. I have always been a political and social activist from the time I stuffed envelopes for JFK in 1960 at the age of 13. I realized my special obligation toward the advancement of women and girls immediately upon my appointment to the bench. I was riding on the back seat of a convertible in the Conejo Valley Days Parade waving at people who were tepidly waving back, when I could actually hear mothers telling their daughters, "Look it's a judge and she's a girl!" The little girls would wave frantically at me and cheer. I thought, "Oh my God, I'm too young to be a role model." But I solicited and accepted speaking engagements at every women's group around – AAUW, Soroptimists, Girl Scouts – and that was a real privilege.

This legacy award made me think about the word "legacy," which looks both backward and forward. Looking over the last 72 years, I'm more and more aware of the gifts I've received that allowed me to accomplish whatever I have. Not money. Not a lot of structure. But my parents and all their friends gave me a view of the world in which I could and would be educated as much as I wished, have the career I wanted and have no limitations arbitrarily placed on me, and particularly, no limitations based on my gender.

Attitude is everything. As further demonstration of my parents' success in engendering this attitude, all three daughters became successful in their respective fields – the youngest daughter as the award-winning writer of Punky Brewster and the X-Man cartoon series, the middle daughter as an Oscar-nominated and Golden Globe winning screenplay writer eulogized at her death by Martin Scorsese, Francis Coppola and Steven Spielberg, and the oldest who became the first female superior court judge in Ventura County. (To some family friends, I was nicknamed "The Failure"). I have two younger brothers who are both equally talented and interesting, but tonight is all about the girls.

My current legacy is the gift that is my personal life which far exceeds the genuine pleasure and satisfaction I take in my work life. My husband, Jay, and I just celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary, and anything I have accomplished is a direct result of being well loved and well cared for. We have two amazing sons, Bret and Tyler, and an adorable granddaughter, Ava. She is beautiful, strong, curious, adventurous and persistent. It pleases me no end that her father, like my father, is creating an atmosphere in which she will learn that only she can impose limits on her aspirations.

I turn finally to the dual obligations we all have – first to make the best use of the legacy we have received and, second, to enhance the legacy we leave for those who come after us. At a recent funeral for the father of a good friend, his priest described Joe as having three rules in life – ask the right questions, be of service, practice gratitude. It seems to me if you do these three things, you will make the best choices, feel fulfilled and make a mark on those around you.

**Ask yourself the right questions** – what is most important in your life? Despite all the articles in *Cosmo* and self-help books, you can't have it all. Or at least, not all at the same time. Beyond the daily tasks we have to do, ask yourself what is the one thing you would really like to do – and do it!

**Ask the people around you the right questions** – life should be an ongoing learning experience. Every day learn something new. Everyone around you sees the world from their own perspective, different from yours. Learning from them builds your capacity for empathy, which is the basis of all social progress.

**Ask those in authority the right questions** – don't take things for granted. Challenge assumptions. As we said in the '60s, challenge authority. Get to the bottom of things so you act with the best information possible. That's how you effect change.

**Be of service** – volunteer. Remember your high school counselor saying, "You'll get as much out of this school as you put into it." It sounds trite but it's true. Nothing improves the world around you and your own view of the world like volunteerism. And share – we are very blessed people. Look where we live, with the beautiful Pacific Ocean out our windows. We are fed, clothed, housed and educated. Share your talents. We never know what impact we will have on those we pass in life, but we will have an impact. Someone is learning something from you whenever they see or hear you. Any act of kindness or generosity may change the recipient's trajectory. Example can be as important as assistance. In almost every case I see, a simple bit of kindness or understanding could have avoided almost all of it.

**Practice gratitude** – I am very grateful to everyone who ever took me under their wing. To Dave Keep, my father's World War II buddy who taught me to play chess when I was seven because he thought I needed to think strategically. To former District Attorney Woodruff

J. Deem, who taught all the law clerks in the D.A.'s office what integrity looked like in the practice of law. To Dorothy Schecter, the dean of women attorneys in the County, who was generous in advice and understanding. To Steven Adams (the guru of family law) who taught me how to teach, and therefore to understand.

Every one of us has someone who served as a mentor, or at least an example. We have an obligation to pay that forward. Stop, answer questions and offer opportunities - what better way to spend your time?



*Theresa Loss is an estate planning attorney with Jones, Lester, Schuck, Becker & Dehesa, LLP. She has significant trial and appellate experience, and her practices emphasizes serving clients in the Conejo Valley. [theresa@venturaestatelegal.com](mailto:theresa@venturaestatelegal.com), 805-604-2655.*

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## BARRISTERS' CORNER

by Brian Israel

Bridging the Gap is scheduled to be held on Jan. 11, 2020, at the Ventura Campus of the Ventura Colleges of Law. The event offers six MCLE credits, including specialty credits for ethics, elimination of bias and competence. The list of speakers is impressive.

Steve Zipperstein, former General Counsel of Verizon Wireless and Chief Legal Officer and General Counsel of Blackberry Ltd., will speak about the legal and ethical implications of the current impeachment proceedings taking place in Washington D.C., and touch on the Mueller investigation. He previously worked for both Robert Mueller and Attorney General William Barr and knows both well, lending to his unique insight.

The **Hon. Glen M. Reiser** will return to give insights and perspectives. For those who practiced in Courtroom J-6, this is not to be missed. **Trevor Quirk** will speak on the topic of voir dire. Quirk was voted 2017 Ventura County Trial Lawyer of the Year.

Brett L. Price is an expert in the area of property tax assessments. His practice involves complex litigation pertaining to the evaluation and taxation of high value energy resource and industrial/commercial properties. In this area, he primarily represents counties, municipalities and special districts. **Vanessa Frank** will present on working with non-US citizen clients and give insight into the current state of asylum, fulfilling the elimination of bias component of the MCLE requirements. Lastly, M. David Meagher's presentation will fulfill the competence MCLE credit. An attorney out of Escondido, Meagher is a veteran speaker, pilot, attorney, author and interventionist.

Please look out for the flyer in *CITATIONS* and sign up for Bridging the Gap.

This past year as President of the Barristers has been a real delight. I encourage all younger and newly practicing attorneys to join Barristers. As always, we are always looking for new members. Nominations for board positions for 2020 are still open.

A "Barrister" is any member in good standing of the Ventura County Bar Association who, on Jan. 1 of a given year, meets at least one of the following requirements: (i) is under the age 36 years; (ii) has been admitted to practice law in any jurisdiction for a period of seven years or fewer; or (iii) has been in practice in any jurisdiction for a total of seven years or fewer. Active law students who are members of the VCBA are considered "Student Barristers" and may serve on the Board as a Member at Large.

The slate for the 2020 Barristers Board of Directors is as follows:

President: **H. Frederick Seigenfeld**  
 Vice President: **Kevin Heimberg**  
 Secretary: **Jessica Wan**  
 Treasurer: **Leonidas Nicol**  
 Immediate Past President: **Brian Israel**

Members-at-Large:

**Elana Cuzzo, Meredith Doyle, Natalie Jay, Sam Mojabi, Joshua Smith, Kristine Tijam, Ben Baumer**

If there are no additional nominations, the Board as listed above will be seated on Jan. 1, 2020. Any questions, comments or requests for more information about the requirements to serve on the Barristers Board, the time commitment and/or expectations, may be sent to Seigenfeld, [rick@seigelaw.com](mailto:rick@seigelaw.com).



**Brian C. Israel** is an associate attorney at Norman Dowler, LLP in Ventura. He serves on the Barristers Board as its President and sits on the VCBA Board of Directors.

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### OFFICE CONDOS FOR SALE

I am currently selling two office condos in Ventura for attorney **Brian Osborne**. This professional office building has about 85percent attorney owners/tenants and is located at 674 County Square Dr, Ventura. We are next door to the District Attorney Building and close to the shortcut "tunnel" that goes underneath Victoria Ave to the County Govt. Center. If you have interest and would like more details or photos, please contact Dan Tafoya at (805) 975-9798 or email: [daniel5775@msn.com](mailto:daniel5775@msn.com).

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