



# CITATIONS

OCTOBER - TWO THOUSAND TWENTY

## CALIFORNIA'S PROPERTY TAX SYSTEM MAY BE SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED THROUGH TWO NOVEMBER INITIATIVES

by Lauren E. Sims

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Kathryn E. Clunen



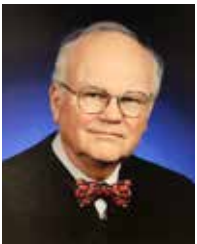
I am so excited for VCBA Past President (2016) **Charmaine Buehner** to have been appointed by Governor Newsom to serve as a judge in the Ventura County Superior Court. She joins other past VCBA Presidents who became judges including Honorable **Matt Guasco** (2008), Honorable **Frederick H. Bysshe, Jr** (1982), Honorable **William L. Peck** (1972) and Honorable **Bruce A. Thompson** (1966).



Matt Guasco



Frederick H. Bysshe, Jr



William L. Peck



Bruce A. Thompson

It is wonderful to see our local bench become more diverse. Since the Ventura County Diversity Bar Alliance (VCDBA) was formed in 2012 and met with Governor Brown's office, two-thirds of judicial appointments have been women and/or minorities.

VCDBA is back up and running at full speed during this critical time in society, and pushing for greater diversity and inclusion. **Jill Friedman** is at the helm working with **Dien Le**, **Jodi Prior**, **Jacquelyn Ruffin**, **Tina**

**Rasnow**, **Monique Fierro**, **Jessica Wan**, **Keri Kettle**, **Danielle DeSmeth**, **Greg Ramirez** and **Mickye Coyle** to provide relevant content on race in VCDBA's joint Webinar with Women Lawyers of Ventura County on Sept. 29. Friedman states, "Having a conversation about race is important to our colleagues, clients, and employees." VCDBA's MCLE webinar last month was able to help folks start this conversation. Friedman says, "Starting a conversation can be uncomfortable and we need to explore why this is and what should we do."

VCDBA hopes to offer other webinars to discuss LGBTQ+ issues and disability rights as well as resurrecting its once popular MCLE event "Everything You Wanted To Know About Becoming A Judge But Were Afraid To Ask." VCDBA also wants to celebrate the diversity of recent judicial appointments and elections. The VCDBA is reinvigorated and ready to continue its efforts to encourage and celebrate diversity in our legal community. Friedman welcomes those who are interested in being involved with the VCDBA to contact her at [jfriedman@mwgjlaw.com](mailto:jfriedman@mwgjlaw.com).

Another group that is expanding is the Ventura County Coalition for Collaborative Divorce (CCD) that meets once a month currently on Zoom. Collaborative practice is a legal process enabling couples who have decided to separate or end their marriage to work with a team, including collaboratively trained lawyers, divorce coaches, financial professionals and child specialists. This process starts when the couple signs an enforceable agreement to disqualify all professionals if the matter proceeds to litigation. It is different from mediation where a neutral third party helps the couple (with or without lawyers) to negotiate a settlement.

In 2015, I did a two-day collaborative practice training with the Sacramento Collaborative Practice Group. Since then I have not had one true collaborative case. Other Ventura County lawyers trained in the collaborative process, such as **David Masci** who has practiced family law for 24 years, also have the same experience. Although collaborative practice is popular in Northern California and the San Fernando Valley, it is not yet as popular as it could be in Ventura County.



Family law attorney, **Alice Arnold**, is the current president of CCD and wants to expand the group to serve more couples. She states, "This team approach is a holistic

way to get a divorce, which also minimizes post-divorce conflict and litigation." With the current court backlog of divorce cases, collaborative practice provides a cost-effective and efficient way for couples to reach a resolution without ever going to the courthouse.

In August, CCD met on Zoom for the first time since the pandemic stopped in-person meetings. I joined in and was excited by the group's enthusiasm about trying to make collaborative practice more popular. CCD meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 5:00 p.m. Although all professionals must be trained to be involved in a collaborative case, Arnold invites anyone interested to join in on the Zoom call to learn more about CCD and find out about the required training. Arnold welcomes contact at [alice@alicearnold.com](mailto:alice@alicearnold.com).

**Kathryn E. Clunen** is of counsel at the *Dion Law Group*, APLC and practices family law. She can be reached at [KatieC@dionlawgroup.com](mailto:KatieC@dionlawgroup.com) or (805) 497-7474.

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## HAVE YOU HEARD?



**Leroy Smith**, who has served as Ventura County Counsel since 2010, has announced that he will retire effective sometime this fall. County Counsel serves as chief civil legal counsel for the Ventura County government and advises the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and county managers. The Board of Supervisors will choose Smith's successor.



Ferguson Case Orr Paterson associate **Jessica Wan** has passed the Patent Bar Exam and is now qualified to practice before the USPTO as well as all California courts. Wan is also licensed in Hawaii.



**Charmaine Buehner**, a past president of VCBA, has been appointed to the Ventura Superior Court, filling a newly created position. Watch for Judge Buehner's profile in a future edition of CITATIONS.

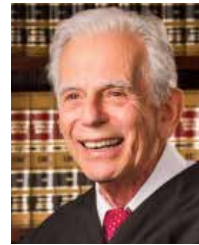
It's that time of year again; nominations for 2021 Barrister Board positions are now open! The Barristers are a section of the Ventura County Bar Association providing programming to assist newer members of our Bar with networking, mentoring, and furthering their educations. Nominations are open for three Members at Large, as well as for Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-President, and President. Eligible Barristers may email nominations to **Leonidas Nicol** at [LN@QLFLaw.com](mailto:LN@QLFLaw.com) (subject line: Barristers Nomination) by 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 9.



**Leonidas Nicol**

A "Barrister" is any VCBA member in good standing who is either 36 years old, has been admitted to practice law, or has been in practice, in any jurisdiction for seven or fewer years. Active law students who are VCBA members are considered "Student Barristers" and may serve as Members at Large, but not as Barristers officers.

Court of Appeal **Presiding Justice Arthur Gilbert** will speak at the October 15th Zoom event sponsored




by Ventura County's chapter of the American Inns of Court. The event will begin at 5:30 p.m. with an informal social period followed by commentary by founding member, **Judge Harry Walsh** at 5:45 p.m. Justice Gilbert will speak at 6:00 p.m. The Justice teases that he may be joined by his colleagues on the bench. Justice Gilbert is a past recipient of the LA County Bar Association's Outstanding Jurist Award. A prolific writer, he is the author of "Under Submission: The First Twenty Years (Volume 1)" and "Under Submission: The Columns of Arthur Gilbert (Volume 2)." Proceeds of the books go to Public Counsel, the largest pro bono law firm in the nation. To learn more about Justice Gilbert's storied career, check out <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/ACLP-2-Gilbert-Transcript.pdf> for an in-depth interview by **Justice Steve Perren**.



Justice Gilbert will speak at 6:00 p.m. The Justice teases that he may be joined by his colleagues on the


bench. Justice Gilbert is a past recipient of the LA County Bar Association's Outstanding Jurist Award. A prolific writer, he is the author of "Under Submission: The First Twenty Years (Volume 1)" and "Under Submission: The Columns of Arthur Gilbert (Volume 2)." Proceeds of the books go to Public Counsel, the largest pro bono law firm in the nation. To learn more about Justice Gilbert's storied career, check out <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/ACLP-2-Gilbert-Transcript.pdf> for an in-depth interview by **Justice Steve Perren**.

The VCBA will publish a Zoom link for participants shortly before the event.



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## TALES OF TRIAL BY ZOOM

by Wendy Lascher

Over the past several weeks, I have been co-counsel in a trial by reference conducted by a retired judge. Each party, each attorney, each witness, and the court reporter are in separate locations.

It has been a fascinating experience. Because the case is not over, I will refrain from commenting except to say that from a technical standpoint, the trial has gone very smoothly. On a couple of occasions the reporter had to ask a participant to repeat what they said, but that happens in the physical courtroom too.

But things could go very wrong. A series of *Law 360* articles highlights a few such instances.

An Alameda County trial began in person, but the court moved it online when one of the jurors came down with a fever. The court later rejected a civil defendant's motion for mistrial based on a "friendly discussion" between the defendant and two jurors while the parties' attorneys and the judge were in a Zoom breakout room after the defendant commented on one a juror's virtual backgrounds. The court then changed its protocol so that jurors, witnesses, and parties are kept in a Zoom "waiting room" where they cannot interact.

Another California judge sent a products liability jury to deliberate in a Zoom breakout room with the instruction that they may not care for their pets or engage in any other offscreen activity while deliberating. The remote trial had encountered various technical problems that delayed testimony and prompted the defendant to file a "notice of irregularities." The defendant complained that "it saw jurors walking around while the court was issuing jury instructions. The defendant also said it saw one juror working and emailing from another computer during opening statements and

two other jurors looking at other screens," and that "an alternate juror was lying in bed." After two days of presumably pet-free deliberations, the jury sided with the defendant.

During a federal court hearing in Georgia last month, reports *Law 360*, testimony was interrupted "when images of the Sept. 11 attacks, pornography and a hand-drawn swastika took over screens," along with "jarring audio and wording that 'Osama' was sharing their screen with the almost 100 people on the call, and at one point a man and woman could briefly be seen performing a sex act." Ironically, this occurred in a case where the plaintiffs were challenging the security of Georgia's electronic voting machines.

Meanwhile, a Texas judge rejected an oil and gas company's effort to postpone a bench trial "on the grounds that a videoconference trial would violate the contract's venue agreement."



*Wendy Lascher is a partner at Ferguson Case Orr Paterson, LLP, and is a State Bar-certified specialist in appellate law. She is a co-editor of CITATIONS.*

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## TOM MALLEY – A BRIEF REMEMBRANCE

by Hon. Steve Stone (Ret.)



**Tom Malley**, the prominent Camarillo lawyer, passed away Sept. 5. He and I were good friends and colleagues in the vineyards of the law for 50 years. Tom arrived in Ventura County in the early 70s having attended and graduated from the University of California Hastings College of Law in San Francisco, where he drove a cab to support himself. He was originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**Greg Gose**, Tom's friend and fellow Camarillo lawyer, and I spoke the other day, and we joked that although Tom liked, on occasion, to play the sophisticated San Francisco lawyer, he couldn't quite get the Pittsburgh soot off.

Tom started in Ventura County working as a lawyer for the Ventura County Legal Aid Society, where he handled mostly impact cases. For instance, he handled the case which compelled the desegregation of the schools in Ventura County. He knew that "separate but equal" was not equal. In another case, back in the day, schools would suspend, without salary, pregnant teachers when they would begin to show, and not let them return to the classroom until after they gave birth. Apparently, some school administrators believed that visibly pregnant women were unfit to be seen by minors. (Who knew!!!) Tom led the court battle to prevent this practice of discrimination and succeeded. The victory

spread across the country and the practice ended.

Even after Tom left Legal Aid to practice in Camarillo, he took on causes for the public good, such as working to provide adequate housing and working conditions for farm workers. He was active in helping to support the building of a National Public Radio station for the tri-counties. He was one of the first Board members of KCLU and served for almost 27 years until his recent death. Tom belonged to and supported many non-profit organizations which all worked to benefit the residents of Ventura County, including Planned Parenthood and Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation. Mary Olson, General Manager of KCLU, told me Tom was brilliant, and that she could count on him as a trusted advisor, always giving important input and feedback, even if, on occasion, she may not have wanted to hear it. He told it like it was.

Tom would attend charitable benefits, auctions and events supporting so many public causes. One of his favorite causes was assisting in having the beautiful Taft Gardens in Ojai open to the public. He worked tirelessly with the Environmental Coalition and the Ojai Land Conservancy and was instrumental in preventing the channelization of Santa Paula Creek. His support of local Boys and Girls Clubs was invaluable. His work in helping to bring CSUCI to Ventura County was a boon to the students and residents of the County. As you can see, Tom cared about Ventura County and cared about its people.

Tom and I, over many, many years, played golf together, along with a fluid 20 or so other hackers. Of all of us, Tom was the only one who didn't sorta violate the rules of golf. If breaking the rules of golf were a crime, we would all be in prison ... but not Tom.

Tom was a superb lawyer, practicing in many areas of the law. He was not only dedicated to his clients, fully knowledgeable in the law, but also was known as a gentleman. He

was always able to separate the wheat from the chaff, and to get quickly to the heart of the problem and work to find the best possible solution.

Our community is richer for having had his presence and involvement. The Bar will miss him as do I.



*Steve Stone, a graduate of UC Berkeley and Hastings College of Law, was in private practice in Ventura County 1962-1976. He was appointed to the Superior Court in 1976 and served*

*until 1982 when he was appointed Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal, where he served until 1999. Currently a founding member and neutral at JAMS.*

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# CALIFORNIA'S PROPERTY TAX SYSTEM MAY BE SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED THROUGH TWO NOVEMBER INITIATIVES

by Lauren E. Sims



If passed, two initiatives on the November 2020 ballot would significantly change the operation of California's property tax system through (1) the creation of a "split roll" whereby commercial and industrial real property generally would be treated differently from other real property, while eliminating some personal property taxes (Proposition 15); and (2) the limitation of exclusions from reassessment for transfers between parents and children (and grandparents and grandchildren), but expansion of transfers of base year values for certain persons (particularly, persons over age 55, severely disabled persons, and victims of natural disasters).

Generally speaking, California's "Prop 13" (referring to California's 1978 ballot measure by which California's Constitution was amended) caps property taxes to a maximum of one percent of the "full cash value" of real property and restricts inflationary increases in assessed values. Unless there is a "change in ownership" of a real property or new

construction, the assessed value may only be increased by a maximum of two percent per year, which has, by-and-large, resulted in the assessed values of properties held for appreciable lengths of time being below their fair market values. For example, a real property purchased in the 1970s for about \$75,000 and now with a fair market value of over \$1,000,000 could have an assessed value of less than \$150,000. Presently, all real property in California is subject to the annual two percent cap on increases in assessed values, though some property is also subject to additional property tax reduction, such as property under a Land Conservation Act (i.e., Williamson Act) contract.

## **Proposition 15: Split Roll Initiative**

Proposition 15 would, for certain property, eliminate the current maximum two percent increase in assessed value each year (tied to the original purchase price), and instead require that commercial and

industrial property (as defined in the statute) be reassessed to its fair market value every three years. In other words, the split roll would essentially eliminate Prop 13 protections for some real property in California unless the property is excluded by meeting value limitations, discussed below. This proposition would also eliminate (or reduce) personal property taxes on business equipment/fixtures.

Under the proposed law, "commercial and industrial real property" is defined to mean "any real property that is used as commercial or industrial property, or is vacant land not zoned for residential use and not used for commercial agricultural production...." Further specific exceptions are provided for vacant land, such as open spaces and parks. The law would also apply to mixed-use property, and the Legislature is tasked with ensuring only partial reassessment of this property (or may provide an exclusion for mixed-use property if 75 percent or more of it is used for residential purposes).

Commercial and industrial property with a fair market value of \$3,000,000 or less is *not* subject to reassessment (and would be taxed under the current system) *unless* an owner of the property holds sufficient other real property interests in California. That is, if any one or more “direct or indirect beneficial owners” of a property with a fair market value of less than \$3,000,000 own(s) commercial or industrial real property with an aggregated fair market value of \$3,000,000 in the state of California (including the subject property), then the subject property valued at less than \$3,000,000 would be reassessed.

As written, what appears to matter for the exclusion is the total fair market value of the real property(ies) in which someone has an ownership interest, not the fair market value of the owner’s percentage interest(s) in the real property(ies). For example, if a person owns 100 percent of a real property worth \$2,000,000 and 5 percent of another real property worth \$4,000,000, this interpretation would mean that the split roll rules would apply to the \$2,000,000 property despite that the total fair market value of the real property interests of the owner is only \$2,200,000. The Analysis by the Legislative Analyst included in the Official Voter Information Guide, however, provides:

***Some Lower Value Properties Not Included.*** This change does not apply if the owner has \$3 million or less worth of commercial land and buildings in California (adjusted for inflation every two years). These properties continue to be taxed based on original purchase price.

This description suggests that perhaps properties will only be reassessed where the **ownership interests** of the subject property owner are greater than \$3,000,000 (meaning that the \$2,000,000 property in the example above would *not* be subject to reassessment under the split roll rules). Since an owner seeking the exclusion must file an annual claim (or claim when a property is transferred) and certify that the conditions of the

exclusion have been met (subject to audit), an interpretation that only an owner’s personal ownership interests in a property “count” toward the \$3,000,000 limit could make administration of the exclusion more difficult than simply aggregating the fair market values of all of the properties in which an owner has any interest.

The \$3,000,000 limits are to be adjusted for inflation every two years beginning Jan. 1, 2025.

The split roll does not apply to residential property, regardless of whether the property is owner-occupied or rented, whether a single-family residence or a multi-unit building. Additionally, the statute specifically provides that “limited commercial uses of residential property, such as home offices, home-based businesses or short-term rentals” are to be classified as residential and therefore not subject to the new reassessment rules.

The proposed statute would exclude land used for “commercial agricultural production” from the split roll. Unlike in the context of residential property, for which the statute specifically excludes structures **and** land from reassessment, the statute only refers to land with respect to agricultural property. This means that associated agricultural non-residential structures and fixtures will likely not be subject to exemption. Essentially, unless other exclusions are met (e.g., the \$3,000,000 value limitation), agricultural structures and fixtures could lose their Prop 13 protections. Notably, in Ventura County, non-living improvements (e.g., barns, wind machines, pumps and fences) are excluded under Williamson Act contracts and taxed according to the Prop 13 system, so Proposition 15 could potentially affect certain structures on property subject to a Land Conservation Act contract.

The split-roll would be phased in starting in the 2022–2023 fiscal year, but owners of property in which a “small business” occupies 50 percent or more of the square footage can seek deferral of implementation until 2025–2026.

Among other requirements, to qualify as a “small business,” the business must own real property in California.

While Proposition 15 will result in real property reassessment, it reduces personal property taxes paid by businesses starting Jan. 1, 2024. For businesses that qualify as “small businesses” under the statute, all tangible personal property used for business purposes would be exempt from taxation (upon annual certification of small business status). For businesses that do not qualify as small businesses, up to \$500,000 of tangible personal property and fixtures, per taxpayer, will be excluded from assessment. Related entities are considered one taxpayer for purposes of determining the \$500,000 exemption limit. Aircraft and vessels are excluded from exemption.

#### **Proposition 19: Changes to Parent–Child/Grandparent–Grandchild Exclusions and Transfers of Assessed Values**

Proposition 19 would institute the Home Protection for Seniors, Severely Disabled, Families, and Victims of Wildfire or Natural Disasters Act. In terms of changes to the existing property tax system, if passed Proposition 19 would reduce the applicability of the parent-child exclusion (and grandparent-grandchild exclusion) and increase the ability for certain individuals to transfer their residence’s existing assessed value to a new residence.

##### **(a) Impact on Exclusions from Reassessment for Parent-Child and Grandparent-Grandchild Transfers**

Under current law, transfers between parents and children (and under certain circumstances, grandparents and grandchildren) of principal residences (without value limitations) and up to \$1,000,000 per individual of “other” real property (assessed value) may be excluded from reassessment. There is presently no requirement that a transferee utilize the transferred real property as their principal residence to qualify for the exclusion.

*Continued on page 14*

*Continued from page 13*

Proposition 19 would essentially rewrite these rules. Setting aside the “family farm” exclusion, discussed below, parent-child and grandparent-grandchild exclusions from reassessment would apply **only** to the purchase or transfer of a “family home” (principal residence) and only if the property continues to be used as the family home of the transferee. The new rules would require that the transferee claim the homeowner’s exemption or disabled veteran’s exemption for the property at the time of transfer or within one year of the transfer. In addition, a portion of the property would be reassessed if the taxable value of the property exceeds the taxable value of the transferred home at the time of transfer plus \$1,000,000 (subject to periodic adjustment for inflation beginning in Feb. 2023).

Proposition 19 would also exclude from change in ownership the transfer of a “family farm,” which is generally “real property which is under cultivation or which is being used for pasture or grazing, or that is used to produce any agricultural commodity...” The same value limitation rules described above apply to the transfers of family farms.

The current system would remain in place for transfers occurring on or before Feb. 15, 2021, and the new system would apply to transfers occurring on or after Feb. 16, 2021.

(b) Impact on Transfers of Base Year Values to Newly-Acquired Properties

Starting April 1, 2021, Proposition 19 would expand the ability for persons to transfer their existing assessed values of “primary residences” (i.e., qualifying for the homeowner’s exemption or disabled veteran’s exemption) to newly-purchased primary residences by removing location restrictions, increasing the number of transfers allowed, eliminating value restrictions, and adding new categories of eligible transferors.

Under current law, persons who are age 55 and older or severely and permanently

disabled may make a one-time transfer of their existing assessed value to a property they purchase (as long as their existing home is sold). The newly purchased property must be of equal or lesser value to the property sold. Presently, an individual may only transfer their assessed value to a different county if the county where the new property is located has adopted an ordinance allowing such transfer (otherwise, individuals are restricted to transferring their base year value within the same county).

Proposition 19 would liberalize these rules by allowing qualifying individuals to transfer their primary residence’s assessed value to anywhere in the state (regardless of whether an ordinance has been adopted in the county to which the base year will be transferred) and to any residence (regardless of value). Severely disabled persons and persons over age 55 could make up to three transfers, up from the current one. If the new property has a fair market value greater than

that of the existing primary residence, an adjustment would be made to the transferred assessed value to reflect the difference. In addition, persons who are victims of a wildfire or “natural disaster” (as defined in the statute) could transfer their base year value to any purchased or newly constructed replacement residence.

### Conclusion

If passed, Propositions 15 and 19 will significantly alter some aspects of California’s property tax system, but will not affect others, such as rules regarding the reassessment of properties held in entities (though those rules may become irrelevant for some owners if the split roll is implemented). Depending on the outcome this November, property owners may decide to make or postpone transfers of properties until the new rules (if any) become effective. On the one hand, those holding interests in commercial and industrial properties or in “legacy” properties that they

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intend will be passed down through the generations may make transfers or gifts before the parent-child/grandparent-grandchild exclusions become limited and/or the split roll is implemented. On the other hand, persons over age 55 and disabled persons may wait to purchase or sell a residence in light of the potential ability to transfer their existing base year value more broadly than is presently allowed. If approved, more guidance will be necessary regarding application of some of the more technical aspects of the proposed legislation, such as the split roll ownership value limitations.



*Lauren E. Sims is an associate at Ferguson Case Orr Paterson LLP, where part of her practice focuses on real property tax matters. She can be reached at [lsims@fcoplw.com](mailto:lsims@fcoplw.com).*

## WE READ SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

Letter to actor Bill Murray

Re: Doobie Brothers *Listen to the Music*

Dear Mr. Murray:

We're writing on behalf of our clients, the Doobie Brothers. The Doobie Brothers perform and recorded the song *Listen to the Music*, which Tom Johnston of the Doobie Brothers wrote. It's a fine song. I know you agree because you keep using it in ads for your Zero Hucks Given golf shirts. However, given that you haven't paid to use it, maybe you should change the company name to "Zero Bucks Given."

We understand that you're running other ads using music from other of our clients. It seems like the only person who uses our clients' music without permission more than you do is Donald Trump.

This is the part where I'm supposed to cite the United States Copyright Act, excoriate you for not complying with some subparagraph that I'm too lazy to look up and threaten you with eternal damnation for doing so. But you already earned that with those Garfield movies. And you already know you can't use music in ads without paying for it.

We'd almost be OK with it if the shirts weren't so damn ugly. But it is what it is. So in the immortal words of Jean Paul Sartre, "Au revoir Golfer. Et payez!"

Sincerely,

Peter T. Paterno  
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**Thursday, October 22, 2020**

11:45 a.m. **Networking**

12:00 p.m. **Presentation**

This activity has been approved for Minimum Continuing Legal Education credit by the State Bar of California in the amount of 1 hour of **GENERAL** credit and 1 hour of **SPECIALIZATION CREDIT** in Estate Planning, Probate, and Trust Law. VCBA 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 Minimum Continuing Legal Education.

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September 17, 2020

To the Ventura County Bar Association and its members

The time has come to advise the Ventura County Bar Association and its members that the firm of Benton, Orr, Duval & Buckingham ceased operations as a law firm as of August 31, 2020 at 5pm. As has happened with many of the older and established firms in Ventura County over that last few years, it was time to move on to other endeavors

The firm has existed going back to 1882, when Orestes Orr moved to Ventura and started his law practice. There was a continuous succession of partnership firms until 1970, when Benton, Orr, Duval & Buckingham incorporated. It has been a long run for Benton, Orr, with many fine credits to the firm in its history. Alumni of the firm include Judges and Justices. Many attorneys and legal secretaries have come and gone over 138 years. As the sage said, however, all good things must come to an end.

The remaining attorneys have elected to not continue in practice all together, predominantly given the wide divergence in their practices. Kevin McCormick is joining the firm of Lowthorp, Richards, McMillan, Miller & Templeman. Donald Wood and Bruce Finck have formed Wood & Finck, a Professional Law Corporation. Randolph Andell has formed the Andell Law Group. Thomas Olson has formed Thomas E. Olson, A Professional Law Corporation. Each will continue practice in their respective areas.

The corporate entity will continue to exist to wrap up its business affairs. The firm has the office at 39 North California Street in Ventura through the end of the year.

If you have any questions, you may contact Thomas E. Olson at [tolson@bentonorr.com](mailto:tolson@bentonorr.com)

Very truly yours,  
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By  
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