



CITATIONS

JUNE - TWO THOUSAND TWENTY TWO

THE WOMEN IN TRIAL TRAVEL SUMMIT

by *Rabiah A. Rahman*

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Jacquelyn D. Ruffin



I recently told my husband that I wanted to find a way to discuss the shootings at Tops supermarket in Buffalo, Geneva Presbyterian Church in Laguna Woods and Robb Elementary School in Uvalde through my monthly message. I informed him that **Sasha L. Collins** wrote a compelling article about mass shootings in the October 2019 edition of *CITATIONS* (<https://tinyurl.com/2mjvuw7w>). I mentioned that the VCBA community is well aware of the legal debates about gun violence and gun regulation (whether concerning the Second Amendment, the filibuster or any of the other numerous issues). In response, he generously offered to share his perspective as a physician. Therefore, this month's message is brought to you by my amazing spouse, Thomas K. Duncan. As a formality, he asked me to note that the contents of his article are his opinion and do not necessarily represent the opinion of his colleagues or any organizations or businesses with which he is affiliated, except to the extent that he cites a specific publication.

I have been an acute care surgeon for more than two decades. In my non-trauma role, I treat appendicitis, repair hernias, drain abscesses, perform colectomies, and conduct surgeries for maladies such as diverticulitis, gallbladder disease and various cancers. As a surgeon treating trauma patients, I perform emergency

operations on patients with critical injuries, including blunt and penetrating traumas from motor vehicle collisions, catastrophic falls, assaults, stabbings and gunshot wounds. In the spirit of Forrest Gump, and without minimizing the gravity of our work, we sometimes say that “being on call is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you’re going to get.”

My profession (my wife refers to it as my calling) has always been challenging. But over the past few years, I have witnessed something beyond the ‘normal’ complexities of working within the healthcare profession. It goes without saying that the COVID-19 pandemic has been taxing on medical professionals. Another distressful factor has been the rise in preventable violent injuries.

We all know that the world unfortunately has a long history of violence. There have been countless wars and currently there are multiple wars in the world. In communities across the globe, people suffer daily firearm violence. Many children need to carefully navigate a pathway from home to school and vice-versa in a manner that will lessen the risk of them becoming victims of violence. Some children and families experience violence at home. All these events are not reported in the media or otherwise given equal attention.

Nevertheless, statistics show that preventable violence – specifically preventable gun violence – has escalated in recent years. For example, in 2020, gun violence was the leading cause of death among children, teens and young adults under 25; there were 45,222 gun deaths in the U.S. (highest ever); firearm homicide rates increased by 35% from 2019 figures; and a child or teen was killed unintentionally by a gun injury every 2.5 days. (Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, *A Year in Review: 2020 Gun Deaths in the U.S.*)

Additionally, there has been a sharp increase in mass shootings. A mass shooting is defined as three or more individuals killed in a single incident. (Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act of 2012. H.R. 2076 112-265.) In the U.S., there have been 214 mass shootings year-to-date. The recent Buffalo, Orange

County, and Uvalde massacres mark the 196th, 201st, and 212th mass shootings, respectively. (See www.gunviolencearchive.org.) Heartbreakingly, Ventura County is no stranger to mass shootings. In 2018, the Borderline Bar and Grill shooting resulted in 28 casualties, including 13 deaths and 15 injured victims. One victim, Cody Coffman, survived the Las Vegas mass shooting, only to succumb to the wrath of the Borderline massacre. He never got to see his sister who was born shortly after he died. (*Ibid.*)

As a surgeon caring for trauma patients, I regularly treat victims of gun violence. Sometimes the trauma team is successful in our efforts to save a victim's life. Sometimes I have the unenviable job of speaking to family members about the loss of their loved one. From this perspective, I believe that injury prevention is the best way to save lives.

Injury prevention has been a staple of trauma departments across the country. Physicians encouraged patients to use seatbelts, car seats and bicycle/motorcycle helmets long before they were required by law. These preventative tools have improved nationwide morbidity and mortality and diminished injury rates over the past several decades. For example, among drivers and front-seat passengers, seatbelts have reduced the risk of death by 45% and the risk of serious injury by 50%. (*CDC Policy Impact: Seatbelts.*) At Ventura County Medical Center (VCMC), every bicyclist/skateboarder involved in a crash that results in a head injury, and whose helmet was damaged or who did not have a helmet when injured, is gifted a helmet prior to discharge from the hospital. Similarly, if a child is brought into the hospital after falling through a window without a proper screen, the family is provided injury prevention counseling and home safety inspection services to avert a subsequent injury.

This same injury prevention approach applies to gun violence. Without taking away Second Amendment rights, the American College of Surgeons promotes safety measures for firearms, including, but not limited to, gun locks, safe gun

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storage, gun safes, proper firearm training, mandatory background checks for firearm purchase, and evidence-based research on firearm injury. (American College of Surgery Committee on Trauma and American College of Surgeons, *Gun Safety and Your Health: A Proactive Guide to Protect You and Those Around You* and *Statement on Firearm Injuries* both available at www.facs.org.)

Our current epidemic of violence warrants additional measures. Decades ago, late Surgeon General C. Everett Koop identified violence as a public health issue which requires an interdisciplinary approach. Ventura County has taken many interdisciplinary steps to address local violence. For example, VCMC offers a violence intervention program that functions under the auspices of the Hospital Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI) and identifies patients at risk of repeat violent injury and connects them with community-based programs that address the underlying causes of violence. Additionally, in the wake of the Borderline tragedy, Supervisor Linda Parks converted her Thousand Oaks office into an emergency counseling haven for victims. The District Attorney's office collaborated with her in this effort, which led to opening the Ventura County Family Justice Center (VCFJC) across the street from VCMC the following year. Currently, patients who are admitted to VCMC due to violent injuries are referred to the VCFJC for wraparound services. The VCFJC navigates survivors and their families through the complex process of interacting with the legal system, behavioral health, law enforcement, area agency on aging, sexual abuse counseling, temporary housing, and other services all under the same roof. To increase access to these comprehensive services, a second VCFJC facility will open in Oxnard in 2023, with funding secured by Assemblywoman Jacqui Irwin, the City of Oxnard and the Oxnard Police Department.

Hemorrhage is the most common cause of death in a traumatic situation. After the Boston bombing and Sandy Hook massacre, a group of stakeholders (championed by the American College of Surgeons and endorsed by the White House administration in

2015) created a course named Stop the Bleed (aka cardiopulmonary resuscitation for trauma). This class teaches the public how to control bleeding by applying pressure from packing gauze and the use of a tourniquet. (See www.stopthebleed.org.) VCMC offers this course throughout the County, most recently at the Government Center in partnership with the Emergency Medical Services on May 19.



As a result of ongoing mass shootings, I recently joined a group of physicians in Sacramento speaking in support of Assembly Bill 2260, which will require presence of a Stop the Bleed kit next to a defibrillator in any new building in California. AB 2260 is awaiting the California Senate's approval then Governor's signature.

Finally, mass shootings do not just have a devastating impact on family, friends and community members. Compounded losses of multiple victims escalate the emotional impact that medical professionals experience in their jobs. Healthcare personnel burnout will escalate if measures to decrease intentional injuries are not taken, leading to a reduction in the pool of such workers.

With each mass shooting that occurs, thoughts and prayers go out to victims and their families. In addition to these heartfelt sentiments, it is my sincere hope that meaningful collaboration from all sides can be made in the aim of making our nation safe.



Jacquelyn D. Ruffin is a partner at Myers, Widders, Gibson, Jones & Feingold LLP. Her practice focuses on corporate/business, real estate and land use matters. She can be

reached at jruffin@mwglaw.com or 805-644-7188.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

On April 1, StakerLaw Tax and Estate Planning Law Corporation became Staker|Johnson Law Corporation. **Brandon P. Johnson** is now a shareholder. Along with estate planning, trust administration and probate law, he also works in business law and trust litigation. The firm has also welcomed two new attorneys. Pepperdine graduate **Samantha W. Koopman** handles conservatorships as well as estate planning, trust administration and probate law. Camarillo native **Antonio M. Rodriguez**, a bilingual Ventura Colleges of Law alumnus, previously worked in the mental health field. Call (805) 482-2282 to speak with a Staker|Johnson attorney.



John Orr and **Michael Case**, two of the founders of Ferguson Case Orr Paterson LLP, planted this oak tree in the Ventura Land Trust's Big Rock Preserve as part of the firm's 40th Anniversary program of public service projects. Orr and Case were joined by **Jessica Wan, Corey Donaldson, Joe Strohmman, Wendy Lascher, Brenda Callaway, Troy Arellanes, Jennifer Perez, Teresa Meehan, John Andersen, Bret Anderson, Frank Messana, Sandie Barron, Barbara Gutierrez, Ian Elsenheimer, Alec Yarbrough, Mike Velthoen, David Shea** and their families planting trees and native plants and pulling weeds during the May 14 project. www.venturalandtrust.org/big_rock



Mike Velthoen and Joe Strohmman.

VCTLA - JUDGE OF THE YEAR

by Danielle R. Everson



On Wednesday, May 11 the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association (VCTLA) hosted its 42nd annual Judges' Night. The program honored the 2020 Judge of the Year and Portrait Honorees. It was originally scheduled in March 2020 but was impeded due to the COVID-19 pandemic. VCTLA honored the **Honorable Matthew P. Guasco** (right) as the 2020 Judge of the Year and the **Honorable Rebecca Riley** (center) and the **Honorable Kenneth R. Yegan** (left) as the 2020 Portrait Honorees.

Each year VCTLA selects one or more former Superior Court judge to have their portrait taken and be hung in the illustrious Courtroom 22. The Judge of the Year award recognizes exceptional judicial performance balanced with courtesy and compassion toward litigants and attorneys in the courtroom. Judges' Night celebrates these honorees and all of the amazing local bench. This year's event was a memorable night with many of our current and retired bench in attendance. Additional photos of the event can be found at www.vctla.org/photo-gallery.

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PLANNING FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF DISABILITY

by Mark E. Hancock

No one intends to become disabled, but it happens. According to the Council for Disability Awareness, just over one in four of today's 20-year-olds will become disabled before they would otherwise retire. (Council for Disability Awareness (disabilitycanhappen.org).

Accidents are not the primary cause. Among the most common causes are cancer, circulatory issues (heart attack, stroke) and mental health issues. (Council for Disability Awareness.) Based on my experience, diabetes and related conditions are also common causes of disability.

Not all sicknesses, or accidents and injuries, are work-related, which means that one cannot count on receiving workers compensation benefits for a disability. State Disability (SDI) might be available, but it may be limited to 52 weeks of benefits. Social Security Disability Income might also be available, but there is often delay, not everyone is approved and benefits are often modest. According to SSA statistics, for example, the average SSDI benefit as of Feb. 2021 was \$1,279.

Accordingly, you should give some advanced thought to what you would do for income if you were to become disabled before 65 or 67.

One way a person can try to help protect themselves in the event of disability is to have long-term disability coverage. This is of especial concern for high earners. Disability coverage typically covers disabilities from sicknesses, as well as from injuries.

There are two basic ways to obtain such coverage. One is to buy it yourself. It is usually referred to as long-term disability insurance, or disability income insurance. Doctors and other high earning professionals often take this route.

Not all policies are the same. They may differ in important respects. Own occupation coverage is better than any occupation coverage, for example. What's the difference?

Basically, own occupation coverage pays if you can no longer perform the occupation you worked at before you became disabled. With such coverage, the insurance company can't argue that a doctor could be a file clerk. While "any occupation" coverage doesn't literally mean any (other) occupation, it does give the insurance company more room to try to argue that the insured can do other things, such that he or she is not entitled to benefits. Any occupation coverage increases the likelihood of disputes.

Some policies change the definition from "own" to "any" after a period of time, like two to five years, so beware. Compare before buying, consider your needs and budget, and be aware that some insurers have better reputations than others in terms of providing you the benefits you paid for and deserve.

We don't do business entity and/or tax-law, or give tax advice, but one possible advantage to paying the premiums yourself and after tax may be that the benefits may be tax-exempt as a result. Remember that when you are disabled, every penny counts. Check with your tax professional in determining how best to pay the premiums. Another advantage may be that you may be protected by state bad faith insurance law, which may give you more leverage in the event of a dispute.

The other way people typically obtain such coverage is as an employee benefit from or through the employer. Many employers provide it, so you should inquire into what employee benefits are provided in job interviews, especially if you have an important job and plan to work at that place any significant amount of time.

Employers really following the law are supposed to provide their employees with Summary Plan Descriptions (SPDs) of benefits, like LTD coverage. If your employer isn't forthcoming, ask. Many employees don't keep them, even if they were handed out. One take away from this article should be to get them and to keep them a safe, easy-to-locate place.

While getting the coverage through work is good, there can be challenges. One is the very real possibility that ERISA (which is federal law) may apply, even though all the employer did was buy into a group disability insurance policy. If ERISA law applies, you generally have to appeal any denial or termination of benefits and punitive damages. If your employer pays the premiums and/or your payments or contributions are made with pre-tax dollars, your benefits may be taxable. Consult with your tax professional.

Because disability insurers don't want to provide an incentive for filing disability claims, or for remaining off work, you should realize that benefits commonly start at about 60 percent of what the person had been earning when they became disabled, though they are usually indexed so as to increase with certain indices. You should be aware of this in your "planning."

If you have disability coverage and become disabled and the plan/insurance company denies your claim, or terminates your benefits, it is important to consult with a lawyer knowledgeable in both state insurance and bad faith law and ERISA disability law early on to determine your rights and the correct course of action.



Mark E. Hancock is an attorney with offices in Ventura, who handles insurance disputes, appeals and lawsuits for people with short and long term disability coverage and other kinds of insurance, such as auto, CGL, condo, health, homeowners, inland marine, life, UM and UIM.

THE WOMEN IN TRIAL TRAVEL SUMMIT

by *Rabiah A. Rahman*

Nearly two years ago my good friend **Lauren Wood** shared with me that she wanted to host an international legal conference for female trial attorneys. I thought it was a great idea and told her she could count on my attendance. This spring, I had the great privilege and honor to see her dream manifest into something none of the attendees could have imaged.

The Women in Trial Travel Summit (WITTS) was held April 1 in Punta De Mita, Mexico. Over the course of four days, 120 female trial attorneys from all over the country had an opportunity learn from one another, network and relax. The conference held educational seminars from 8:30am – 12pm each day, and the schedule built in time for self-care and relaxation. All the speakers presented high-quality programs. There was a mock voir dire demonstration and two masters' panels. I attend a lot of legal conferences, but I had never experienced anything quite like this. I knew I was not alone in this sentiment. I reached out to Lauren Wood to learn more about her vision behind the conference and whether it lived up to her original goal.

From Lauren Wood:



Those who know me well know I love to travel. I am also a planner. I love to plan things—especially trips. So, I thought, how could I combine two of my passions: travel and being a trial lawyer. And then I thought, perhaps it would be even better to create an event just for women! I wanted the event to be held in a beautiful location—somewhere international—where we could

all get together and bond and find new ways to support each other in our legal practice and work-life balance. I had previously obtained an MCLE certification for a small group trip to Bali, Indonesia in 2020. I knew a conference was what I wanted to do next. Thus, the Women in Trial Travel Summit was born.

I knew I wanted to create something just for women—just for us. I have to admit, the goal was initially to create a fun event for a group of female litigators to travel to a beautiful destination, write off the trip and hopefully learn a little along the way. However, I never have imagined that this conference experience would end up being so meaningful to so many. I was truly humbled by the many women who approached me and say: “I needed this. I didn’t know I needed this, but I **needed** this.” Many conference attendees also told me that the feeling of the event was different. They felt comfortable talking about things they wouldn’t normally feel comfortable sharing in a large setting. They felt more comfortable showing up and being themselves. There was a strong feeling of support and sisterhood in the air and continued to develop throughout the event.

While the impetus behind this event was to simply combine my passion for travel and my love for the legal profession, the tangential focus of creating a space for women lawyers was what really made this event a true success. I never could have imagined that 120 women would travel to Mexico for my first event. I am so honored, so grateful, and so incredibly excited for the events to come.

Lauren Wood lives in Camarillo, CA and is a trial attorney with the Omega Law Group, P.C. in Beverly Hills. She can be reached at lwood.attorney@gmail.com.

Several attorneys from Ventura County also attended the WITTS. I reached out to **Katie Becker** and **Rennee Dehesa**, partners with Lester, Schuck, Becker, Dehesa & Hirschberg, LLP to comment on their experiences.

From Rennee Dehesa:



The WITTS conference was the first conference I have ever attended internationally and the first which was geared to women attorneys. Speakers presented in 15-20 minute timeslots on a variety of topics. The conference was packed with educational information, which was not boring or drawn out, and the material covered a lot of varying topics from self-care to bankruptcy. The sponsored events were first class and allowed for great networking opportunities.

I gave a presentation on the intersection of conservatorships and probates in personal injury and other civil consumer cases. When Lauren asked me to present at the conference and suggested the topic, I thought, “Why would plaintiff’s attorneys want to hear about conservatorships and probates?” In preparing for my presentation and in compiling the requests I sometimes get from personal injury attorneys and other attorneys representing individuals in civil actions, I realized a common theme – when a client dies or is cognitively impaired, there is little guidance for their counsel on how to handle these major events and can dramatically impact the outcome of their cases. I have also encountered multiple potential ethical and liability considerations that may arise in these cases. For example, conservatorship cases in which an attorney hired by someone other than the conservatee may file and administer a lawsuit when the conservatee is the injured party or the plaintiff. This may open up the attorney to potential liability and potential ethical violations if not handled properly.

It turns out that it was a popular, and well received, topic. Plaintiffs’ counsel are not provided with a lot of education or guidance on how to handle these situations and conferences do not typically cover topics that do not directly relate to their practice areas. Many personal injury attorneys end up dealing with the death or incapacitation of their clients at some point or another in their practice. I was honored to provide attorneys with resources on how to navigate this potentially critical juncture in their case.

From Katie Becker:

The Women in Trial Travel Summit, masterminded and run by Lauren Wood, was a fantastic experience. We were able to obtain eight continuing education units (partially thanks to my partner, Renee Dehesa), meet and network with amazing attorneys, consume delicious food and cocktails, and relax in a gorgeous location with beautiful weather. The venue was stunning. The Conrad at Punta de Mita is just north of Puerto Vallarta, about a 45-minute drive up the coast. The secluded resort had everything you needed to enjoy life for the weekend, and I definitely took my opportunity to do so. After the fantastic and educational seminars in the morning, I was able to lay by the pool, talk to the other attendees at the swim up bar, and have a spa afternoon (or two). It was wonderful to allow myself to unwind, listen to the

tropical birds, the waves, the spa music, and be able to casually network if I felt like it. The weekend’s agenda made relaxation easy, which is uncommon these days. In fact, one of the seminars was specifically about self-care, while another focused on work-life balance as women attorneys with children. It was a goal of Lauren’s to remind the attendees that life is beautiful, travel keeps us well-rounded, and that work can be fun and exciting too. One of the most common statements I heard during the weekend was: “I needed this!” She did a fantastic job, and we all – most definitely - appreciated her efforts.

Thank you, Renee and Katie, for sharing your experiences. This truly was a conference like no other. After surviving a pandemic, transitioning to virtual court appearances and remote meetings for nearly two years, gathering in an exotic location with positive vibes all around was exactly what I needed too.

I hope you all continue to stay well and find time to relax.



Rabiya A. Rahman is an employment law attorney, and her firm exclusively represents employees in employment litigation. She can be reached at (805) 626-8337 or Rabiya@Rabiyaatlaw.com



Mock Voir Dire presentation with jury consultant Claire Plotkin and attorneys Siannah Collado, Christa Ramey and Lourdes DeArmas



Masters panel with Ibiero Seck, Kathryn Steiner, Micha Liberty, Geraldine Weiss (not pictured) and Candice Klein (not pictured)



Solo & Small Firm Panel: Griselda Rodriguez, Neyleen Beljajev-Ortiz, Britany Engelman-Hicks



Morning speaker sessions



Back, left to right: Lucie Barron, Mayra Fornos, Lourdes DeArmas, Isabel Dann, Kelly Hanker, Christa Ramey, Ronni Whitehead, Michelle Fonseca-Kamana, Nicole Prince, Kristin Neerhof, Neyleen Beljajev-Ortiz; Front: Jennifer Johnson, Tamara Freeze, Christina Coleman, Ji-In Houck, Julie Gossett, Allyson Ostrowski, Kristine Gallo



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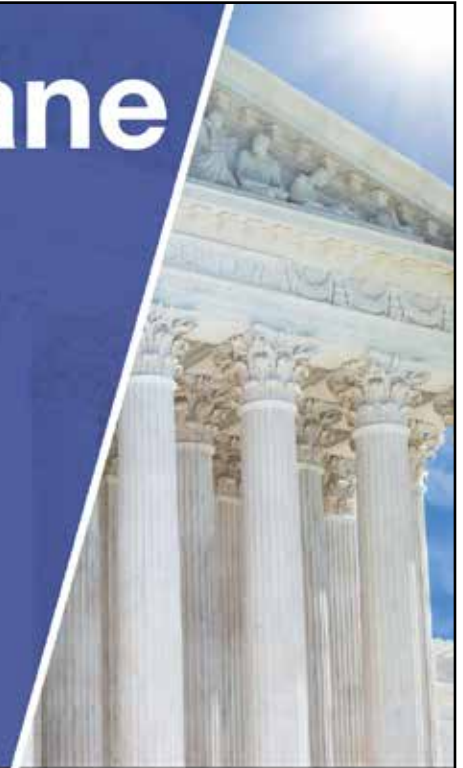
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REPORTERS REDUCED – WATCH OUT

by Wendy Lascher

The Ventura Superior Court has announced that as of May 2, the court has stopped providing court reporter services in a wide range of matters. Budget cuts or not, this is a **big** problem.

There’s a conclusive presumption that without a transcript, it didn’t happen. (*Protect Our Water v. County of Merced* (2003) 110 Cal.App.4th 362, 364). “[T]he absence of a court reporter at trial court proceedings and the resulting lack of a verbatim record of such proceedings will frequently be fatal to a litigant’s ability to have his or her claims of trial court error resolved on the merits by an appellate court.” (*Jameson v. Desta* (2018) 5 Cal.5th 594, 608.)

Although it’s possible to use a “settled statement” in place of a reporter’s transcript (Rule 8.137, Cal. Rules Ct.), it’s an expensive and often unsatisfactory

alternative. An “agreed statement” (Rule 8.134) is better, but if you can agree with opposing counsel, why not just settle?

It’s not only on appeal where an official transcript matters. What about impeaching a party in a later proceeding? Or reminding a court what it said at a previous hearing? Moving for new trial? Circumstances leading to a previous restraining order?

Why not just use tape or video recordings of trials in place of court reporters? That’s a huge can of political worms. Over the years, reporters have successfully lobbied against allowing recordings as official trial records, but maybe it’s time to reconsider.

Parties who have been granted fee waivers may make a written request for a reporter where the court does not provide for a reporter; otherwise, indigent litigants would be deprived of equal protection of

the law. (*Jameson v. Desta, supra*, 5 Cal.5th at p. , 622.) The request generally must be made ten days before the hearing, “or as soon as practicable if set with less than 10-days’ notice.” (Rule 2.956(c);

Of course, any party may arrange a reporter at their own expense. This is something it’s crucial to discuss with clients **before** going to court, and to anticipate how to pay for it in negotiating fee agreements where future court appearances are likely.



Wendy Lascher is a State Bar certified specialist in appellate practice. She is a partner at Ferguson Case Orr Paterson, LLP in Ventura, and co-editor of CITATIONS. Contact her at (805)659-6800 or wlascher@fcoplaw.com



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JUDICIAL COUNCIL SPR 22-16 – RULES AND FORMS: SMALL ESTATE DISPOSITION

by John M. Andersen

Probate Code section 890, enacted in 2019 by AB 473, requires the Judicial Council to adjust the dollar amounts to qualify for the various small estate procedures under Division 8 of the Probate Code (§§ 13000 *et seq.*) based on changes to the U.S. Consumer Price Index for “All Urban Consumers.” Those inflation adjustments are to occur every three years, and the first such adjustment took effect on April 1. As part of its “Spring Cycle” of proposals, the Judicial Council recently published SPR 22-16 setting forth these amount inflation adjustments:

Deaths before April 1, 2022:

- \$166,250 for Affidavit for Collection, Receipt, or Transfer of Personal Property (Prob. Code § 13100)
- \$166,250 for Court Order Determining Succession to Property (§ 13150)
- \$55,425 for Affidavit for Succession to Real Property of Small Value (§ 13200)

- \$16,625 for Affidavit for Collection of Compensation Owed to Deceased Spouse (§ 13600)

Deaths on or after April 1, 2022:

- \$184,500 for Affidavit for Collection, Receipt, or Transfer of Personal Property (§ 13100)
- \$184,500 for Court Order Determining Succession to Property (§ 13150)
- \$61,500 for Affidavit for Succession to Real Property of Small Value (§ 13200)
- \$18,450 for Affidavit for Collection of Compensation Owed to Deceased Spouse (§ 13600)

In accordance with Probate Code section 890’s mandate, SPR 22-16 introduces a new Judicial Council form – DE 300 – which lists the dollar limitations for the various small estate procedures both before and after April 1, and notes that the next scheduled adjustment will occur on April 1, 2025.

Of particular note, for deaths occurring on or after April 1, 2022, Judicial Council form DE-300 must be attached to any affidavit, declaration or petition under any of the small estate procedures under Division 8, including an affidavit under Probate Code section 13100. (See Prob. Code §§ 13101(f), 13152(e), 13200(f), and 13601(e)(2).)



John M. Andersen is Certified as a Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust and Probate Law by the California State Bar. He is a partner at Ferguson Case Orr Paterson LLP. (805) 659-6800 or jandersen@fcoplaw.com.

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JUSTICE PAST AND PRESENT

by Wendy Lascher

If you want to learn about old courthouses in California, the website for the California Supreme Court Historical Society (<https://www.cschs.org/>) is a great starting place. But sometimes, you just come across them, as I did on a recent roadtrip.

If you've been to Mammoth, you may have seen the fancy modern Mono County Superior Court building. The county has two judges, who alternate between that courthouse and the original one in Bridgeport.



Bridgeport courthouse distance



Bridgeport courthouse detail



Courtroom in Bridgeport courthouse



Downtown Bridgeport

Crossing Monitor Pass westbound from Highway 395, it's a quick detour to Markleeville, the county seat of Alpine County, population 1,159 or 1,204 (depending on which part of Google you believe) as of 2020. The general store, which is next to the courthouse, is a good place for judicial election posters.



Alpine County Government Center and courthouse



General store and judicial election Alpine County

Onward to the southern part of the Gold Country. We looked but couldn't find a historical courthouse in Jackson (Amador County), but Calaveras County more than made up for it in legal history sites. The courthouse first was in Mokelumne Hill.



Old Calaveras County courthouse context (Mokelumne Hill)

Later the County seat moved to San Andreas, home of the outlaw poet Black Bart.



Black Bart Professional offices San Andreas



Chambers with shotgun San Andreas



San Andreas historical courthouse (and outhouse)

A few miles from San Andreas, the Calaveras County town of Murphys boasts a few lawyers, including:



Nearby in Tuolumne County the Mother Lode town of Columbia boasts a state historical park, including the



Columbia Justice Court

The county seat has moved to Sonora



Sonora streetfront court



Sonora Courthouse

Along Highway 59 between Sonora and Merced is the




Merced County first courthouse sign




Merced County first courthouse

Wendy Lascher is a State Bar certified specialist in appellate practice. She is a partner at Ferguson Case Orr Paterson, LLP in Ventura, and co-editor of CITATIONS. Contact her at (805) 659-6800 or wlascher@fcoplaw.com



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