



CITATIONS

NOVEMBER - TWO THOUSAND TWENTY THREE



KAREN OAKMAN - 2023 BEN E. NORDMAN PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

by Kathryn Clunen

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LAURA WITHROW

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by *Brian C. Israel*

One of the first things that I thought about after joining the Ventura County Bar Executive Committee was planning the Annual Installation and Awards Dinner. Though it would be a few years away until I became President, I continually thought about where it would be held and what it would look like. At times, I wondered if the Annual Dinner would even be held, in light of the Covid-19 health emergency.

Now that November is here, worrying about the Annual Dinner reminded me of a quote I once read by Dale Carnegie, "Remember, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday." Though this quote makes me chuckle, it was and is hard not to worry about the future. At a time when the divisions in this country and world are deep, where uncertainty of our future is ever present, worry is something we all live with.

However, with so much worry in this world, November is a reminder to be thankful for so many things. On Veterans Day, we are reminded about our nation's veterans and their service to our country. As President of the Bar, I am thankful for those members of the Bar and/or their families who have served.

On Thanksgiving, we give thanks for all that we have. We give thanks for our families, our health, our jobs, and an endless amount of other things. Turkey, pumpkin pie, stuffing, and football certainly help us forget our worries. Happy Thanksgiving to everyone out there and may it be filled with joy and warmth. I am also thankful for all those members in this community who will be donating time, food, and other materials to non-profits and other good causes.

I am also thankful that we are able to come together on November 18, 2023, at the Ventura Beach Marriott to celebrate our community and to have a little fun. By now you should have received an invitation in the mail for an evening of "Music and Magic." Even better, I hope you have bought a ticket or at least considered buying a ticket for our evening celebration. Regardless, please consider this a personal invitation to the Annual Installation and Awards Dinner.

Before I get to the music and magic, this night is truly about the award recipients who are being honored. To that end, **Mike**

Percy is the 2023 recipient of the James D. Loebel Ventura County Legal Aid Pro Bono Award. Congratulations Mike! My Dad had the privilege of knowing and working with **James "Jim" D. Loebel** and this award has a special meaning to me as I have heard of Mr. Loebel's good deeds. **Alfred Vargas** detailed Mike in the October 2023 issue of *Citations* and it's safe to say that Mike has been a fixture helping others in Ventura County for a long time, as Mr. Loebel previously was.

Congratulations is also in order to **Bradley David Marcus**, the recipient of the 2023 Verna R. Kagan Pro Bono Service Award. **Don Greenberg**, a man of many accomplishments himself, had many nice things to say about Brad in the October 2023 issue of *Citations*. As many members of the Bar can attest, any award in Verna's name is reflective of great contributions to our community.

Lastly, **Karen Oakman** is the recipient of the 2023 Ben E. Nordman Award. In addition to many other pro bono and volunteer opportunities, Karen has served as a Director and Secretary on the Board of the Conejo Free Clinic and is a past President of the Women Lawyers of Ventura County. She also happens to be a graduate of California Western School of Law (quick shout-out to my alma mater). Congratulations on the recognition and thank you for all the contributions to our community.

The Annual Installation and Awards Dinner also serves to install new and returning

Board members for their two-year terms. I want to personally thank those Board members who are taking the time to serve on the Board of Directors.

Now, on to the music and magic that accompanies the celebration of our community. I am excited for Aaron O'Brien to speak to us and to bring his combination of comedy and magic to the Annual Dinner. I have a feeling that those who attend the Annual Dinner will be enthralled and may audibly gasp "wow" in response to Aaron.

As for the music (and subsequent dancing), we are blessed to have Deep Cover perform for us. This is an extra special performance for VCBA as the Honorable **F. Dino Inumerable**, Ventura County Superior Court Judge, and Honorable **Dusty Kawai**, Ventura County Superior Court Commissioner, are members of the band. In my mind, I imagine the Deep Cover rehearsals are a mix of music and legal theory.

I can't wait to see you all there..



Brian C. Israel is an associate attorney at Norman Dowler, LLP in Ventura. His practice focuses on estate planning, probate, and trust administration. He can be reached at bisrael@normandowler.com or at 805-654-0911



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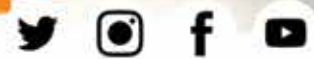
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David Joseph Olivas, 63, passed away on September 29. David earned his BA from Harvard University, then earned his Juris Doctor degree from the UCLA School of Law. After graduation, he served as a Judicial Law Clerk for the Hon. David W. Williams of the United States District Court, Central District of California. He was president of Latinx Ventura Chapter. He was an active member of the Montalvo Community Council and Ventura Chamber of Commerce. He was also the co-chair of the Public Safety Racial Equity Advisory Group.



John Francis Scoles, 82, passed away on August 16. John served in the US Army at the Presidio in San Francisco, and in Japan from 1966-1968. He graduated from McGeorge School of Law. After passing the Bar, he joined the office of **Joseph P.D. Kern**, and then Arthur Taylor, for nearly 40 years in the practice of law in what eventually became Taylor, Scoles, and Bartels. He is a former past president of the Fillmore Chamber of Commerce and Rotary International and was very pleased to be elected to the Fillmore High School Sports Hall of Fame and the OSU 1963 Team Hall of Fame.



The UC Santa Cruz Foundation has elected six new trustees who are established leaders across a range of industries, from fiber optics and scientific operations to media, arts, and community service. Ventura County attorney **Panda Kroll** has been elected to join the Foundation Board of Trustees. Panda defends attorneys and other consumer advocates in federal lawsuits throughout the country in lawsuits brought by timeshare developers who seek to enjoin those advocates' efforts in assisting timeshare owners burdened with unlawful and/or unconscionable "in perpetuity" timeshare contracts.



On October 18, 2023, Governor Gavin Newsom announced the appointment of Ventura Superior Court Commissioner **Paul William Feldman** to a judgeship in the Ventura Superior Court. The appointment authorizes Judge Feldman to begin his judicial duties immediately. Judge Feldman fills the vacancy created by the elevation of **Justice Tari Cody** to the Court of Appeal earlier this year.

Prior to his appointment, Judge Feldman served as court commissioner beginning on July 5, 2022, and, in that capacity, he heard misdemeanor and traffic arraignments and trials, small claims trials, juvenile traffic/truancy, guardianships and expungement matters.



Ventura County Community Foundation ("VCCF") will start accepting scholarship applications for the **J. Roger Myers** Scholarship Fund on November 6, 2023. Applications close on January 19, 2024. Applications can be found at VCCF's website <https://vccf.org/scholarships>. VCCF awards the scholarship in May 2024. However, the \$5,000.00 scholarship is "officially" awarded on an ongoing, yearly basis at the Ventura County Bar Association's annual Installation and Awards dinner that occurs every November.

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must be residents of Ventura County who are enrolled at any law school in the United States. Students must intend to return and practice law in Ventura County. Preference in the selection process will be given to military veterans or those currently in the military. There is also a specially required essay of 300-500 words for the applicant to explain how they intend to use their law degree to benefit the local Ventura County legal community. These eligibility requirements honor J. Roger Myers' military service and his dedication to serving the local community throughout his 52-year legal career.

If anyone knows of any law student who is a resident of Ventura County and meets all the other criteria set forth above, please encourage them to apply.



KAREN OAKMAN - 2023 BEN E. NORDMAN PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

by Kathryn Clunen



Karen Oakman is the 2023 recipient of the Ventura County Bar Association's Ben E. Norman Public Service Award. Oakman selflessly dedicates an immense amount of time to the service of others in her community, through her involvement in community organizations and public service projects.

Oakman is a family law and criminal defense attorney and has been practicing since 2010. She shares her legal expertise and philanthropic spirit with numerous local organizations.

Dedication to Public Service

Conejo Free Clinic (CFC) is a nonprofit organization that provides free medical, dental, and legal assistance to qualifying Conejo Valley residents. CFC has been a great benefactor of Oakman's endless energy, resourcefulness, and belief in access to justice for all. Oakman works with clients, recruits new volunteer attorneys for the clinic's legal team, and raises awareness within the legal community. In 2017, Oakman began volunteering with CFC, joined its board of directors, then became its legal director. Oakman was CFC's secretary from 2018 through 2021, and 2023, and she served as CFC's president in 2022-2023.

CFC volunteers Corliss Krivoy and Susan Drapkin have commented, "Thanks to

Karen, the number of legal specialties offered by the CFC has vastly increased to meet the increasingly significant need of the community. And ultimately, many of the CFC legal clients have expressed great appreciation for the services they received." In fact, during Covid, the clinic was in danger of closure due to health concerns, but Oakman solved the problem by pivoting to virtual client/attorney appointments, thereby keep the clinic running for those who needed it most.

Dedication to Leading

Oakman also never shies away from taking leadership positions. Women Lawyers of Ventura County has benefitted from her active involvement since 2019. She has held the positions of board secretary, vice chair, and president. This year, as immediate past president, she volunteered her knowledge and time to keep the nonprofit running smoothly. "Karen is a phenomenal inspiration. Her work on Women Lawyer's events throughout the years has been vital. She is always someone you can count on to volunteer for tasks, and she reliably gets things done" says current WLVC President **Lauren Nicholson**.

Oakman has also served on the board of the Ventura County Family Law Bar Association since 2017, when she first became a member. Since then, she has acted as their treasurer (2017-2018) and their vice president (2019).

The Ventura County Diversity Bar Alliance also enjoys Oakman's spirit of inclusivity and acceptance of all. She has been a board member with the Alliance since 2022 and served as its Co-President with **Dien Le** in 2022. Le says "When I was Co-Chair of the Ventura County Diversity Bar Alliance last year, Karen (representing WLVC) was actively involved in helping us organize many of our successful events. She consistently attended all our meetings, and was always willing to volunteer her efforts. So naturally when it came time to choose a successor co-chair for this year, she was our first choice. Karen is so deserving of the Nordman Award, and we are thrilled to see her being honored for her tireless service to the community."

Dedication to Mentoring

On top of her local volunteer and board involvement, Oakman also works as an adjunct professor. California Lutheran University (CLU) has been lucky enough to have her since 2015, where she teaches criminal law and procedure and constitutional law for the University's criminal justice department. From 2017 to 2019 she served as CLU's pre-law coordinator. Oakman mentors her college students, which includes bringing them to court to see what being a lawyer is really like.

Oakman, a CLU alumna herself, has supervised several interns through CLU's Pre-Law program. 2022 CLU intern, Mia Deck, says "Karen is a great mentor for future law school students. While interning for her, she showed us and taught us a lot about the procedural processes of the legal field. She also serves as a good role model by using her profession to help others such as her volunteer work at the free clinic. We love Karen!"

Dedication to Community

Oakman does all this while maintaining her own family law and criminal defense practice. In 2020, Oakman launched Clunen and Oakman Law, LLP with her colleague and friend **Kathryn Clunen**. She has been named a Super Lawyer since 2022. If you're lucky, you can see her zealously advocating for her clients in court with her bright yellow briefcase.

Oakman's compassionate, kind, and generous spirit exemplifies the best in what attorneys can offer. "I am honored to receive this year's Ben E. Nordman award. I am also excited this may bring additional attention to the Conejo Free Clinic, which does such important work," says Oakman.

Dedication to Family

While giving so much time to the community, Oakman still finds time to raise two amazing children with her husband Jon in Thousand Oaks. Of course, she volunteers at her kids' elementary school in



the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). She has been the PTA parliamentarian from 2020 to 2022 and is currently the secretary for the school years 2022-2024.

Outside of practicing law (and all of her many other activities), Oakman enjoys playing tennis, using her Cricut crafting machine to make personalized items for friends, and listening to true crime podcasts.

Please join us in celebrating Karen Oakman and everything she does at the upcoming VCBA Annual Dinner.

Kathryn Clunen is a partner at Clunen and Oakman Law, LLP. Her practice focuses on family law and mediation. She can be reached at Katie@Clunenandoakman.com or (805) 273-4200.



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BARRISTERS' CORNER

by Ben Baumer

Nominations for 2024 Barrister Board Positions are Now Open

Barristers, a section of the Ventura County Bar Association, provides annual programming each year to assist the newer members of our Bar with networking, mentoring, and furthering their educations. Each year, Barristers organizes events for entertainment (such as Trivia Night, Wine & Cheese Night and Meet the Bench), MCLEs (e.g., the Judicial Speaker Series and Bridging the Gap), and connects new lawyers (and law students) with attorneys in fields of expressed interest through its network. Barristers' six to eight member board coordinates these events each year and is always looking for additional members (including law students) to assist with planning and to offer new ideas.

Do you know someone who would be a great addition to the Barristers Board? Would you like to be a member?

If you are interested, the following seats are available for nomination for next year's Barristers Board:

1. Member at Large (three)
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer
4. Vice President
5. President

Nominations may be emailed to bbaumer@lrrmmt.com (subject line: Barristers Nomination) and must be received by 11:59 p.m. on November 30, 2023. Nominations may only be made by eligible Barristers (described below).

Nominees will be confirmed for eligibility. A "Barrister" is any member in good standing of the Ventura County Bar Association who, on January 1 of a given year, meets at least one of the following requirements: (i) is under the age of thirty-six (36) years; (ii) has been admitted to practice law in

any jurisdiction for a period of seven (7) years or less; or (iii) has been in practice in any jurisdiction for a total of (7) years or less. Active law students who are members of the Ventura County Bar Association are considered "Student Barristers" and may serve on the Board as a Member at Large, but may not serve as an officer of the Board.

If you would like more information or to see a Barristers Board meeting in action, please e-mail Ben Baumer bbaumer@lrrmmt.com for information regarding the next meeting. We meet on the first Thursday of every month.



Ben Baumer is an attorney with Lowthorp Richards. He practices in the areas of personal injury, civil litigation, and business litigation.

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14	Judge, Ryan J. Wright Supervising Judge Criminal Division
23	Vacant
24	Judge Paul W. Feldman
25	Judge Catherine M. Voelker
26	Judge Marine Dermadzhyan
27	Judge Paul W. Baelly
37	Judge Patricia M. Murphy
44	Judge Kristi J. Peariso
45	Judge Maureen M. Houska
46	Judge Anthony J. Sabo
47	Judge David R. Worley
48	Judge Derek D. Malan
J5/S1	Commissioner Julia Snyder
APPELLATE DEPARTMENT	
	Judge Ronda J. McKaig, Presiding Appellate Judge
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WOMEN LAWYERS' ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP DINNER DELIGHTS

by *Lauren Nicholson*

Women Lawyers of Ventura County held its fifteenth annual Scholarship Dinner and Silent Auction on October 3, 2023, at the Onyx Bistro in Camarillo.

The first awards were given to law students **Melinda Khachaturian** and McKenna Fitzpatrick. Khachaturian is in her third year at the Santa Barbara and Ventura Colleges of Law, and she spoke passionately about her background as a mental health advocate. Fitzpatrick is in her third year at Pepperdine University Caruso School of Law. She currently serves as a certified law clerk at the District Attorney's office.

The Holly Spevak Award, which is given to a member of the legal community who has increased access to justice through pro bono legal service, was presented to attorney **Carolyn Tulberg**, whose tireless dedication to the Ventura Legal Aid Clinic and other volunteer endeavors make her the ideal example of giving back to the community. And, everyone was thankful that she made it to the dinner on time; she double-checked that the event didn't conflict with her volunteer commitment earlier that afternoon.

Finally, the Legacy Award, given to a member of the community at large who has significantly contributed to the advancement of the aims and rights of women and girls in society, was awarded to attorney and keynote speaker **Jody Moore**. As a senior partner at Johnson-Moore, Moore developed a passion for advocating against elder abuse. She and her partner **Greg Johnson** received the first civil elder abuse verdict in Ventura County in 2002. She has continuously leveled-up her practice since then.

In 2021, she and two other female trial attorneys tried a complex cluster case to verdict in Alameda County. The case was tried entirely by Zoom. It lasted four months, involved 10 plaintiffs, and resulted in a \$14.5 million dollar verdict, including punitive damages. The trial team was recognized as the San Francisco Trial Lawyer of the Year, and Moore herself was the first woman ever to receive Ventura County Trial Lawyer of the Year recognition. Her



impact is seen not only in what she does for her clients and in the courtroom, but in her ability to model for other women how they can balance the practice of law with also leading fulfilling lives.

Past presidents enjoyed each other's company, and silent auction items were bid on and taken home. The Raw Honey Band provided wonderful music. The well-attended event raised money for scholarships and for continued outreach in the community.



Lauren Nicholson is an attorney at *Nicholson Law, APC*, focusing exclusively on family law matters and mediation. Lauren can be reached at Lauren@Lnicholsonlaw.com or (805) 535-4149.

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“Best Advice Offered” is a new addition to CITATIONS magazine. We will periodically feature valued advice received by local members of the Ventura County Bar, whether it was last week, last year, or last century! CITATIONS welcomes your suggestions for future editions. Please email sandra@vcba.org.

“Do not put anything in writing to opposing counsel that you would not want the judge to read.” *Rachel Coleman.*

Steve Henderson advised, “It’s better to dance with the devil you know, than the one you don’t.” *Sandra Rubio.*

Wendy Lascher advised, “If you’re complaining about your job and you think you know better, put out your own shingle” – a variation of what we tell our teenagers. *Panda Kroll.*

Mark Pachowicz advised (among many kernels of wisdom), “Start with the jury instructions!” *Kat Maheu.*

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East Ventura County Employer Advisory Council (EVC-EAC)

by Laura Withrow

www.eastventuraeac.org

The East Ventura County Employer Advisory Council (EVC-EAC) is an independent, non-profit organization with two major functions: (1) working to educate employers to deal with employment-related issues, providing low-cost and timely seminars on employment law, pending legislation, and proper human resource practices; and (2) partnering with the

California State Employment Development Department (EDD) to market its services and to promote regulations, policies, and business-friendly procedures.

VCBA member and attorney **Laura Withrow** of Withrow Employment Law, PC, is the Programs Chair for the EVC-EAC. Her responsibilities include planning monthly educational programs for our membership and obtaining corporate sponsors for our event. She is always looking for dynamic and interesting speakers to share their knowledge with our group, or local service providers who would like to be spotlighted for our membership by sponsoring an event.

If you are interested in a speaking or sponsorship opportunity, please contact Laura by e-mail at laura@withrowemploymentlaw.com. You can also contact Jodi Davis, Chairperson, at jdavis@crossroadsx.com.

If you volunteer or are active with a nonprofit that you’d like to highlight, please email sandra@vcba.org.



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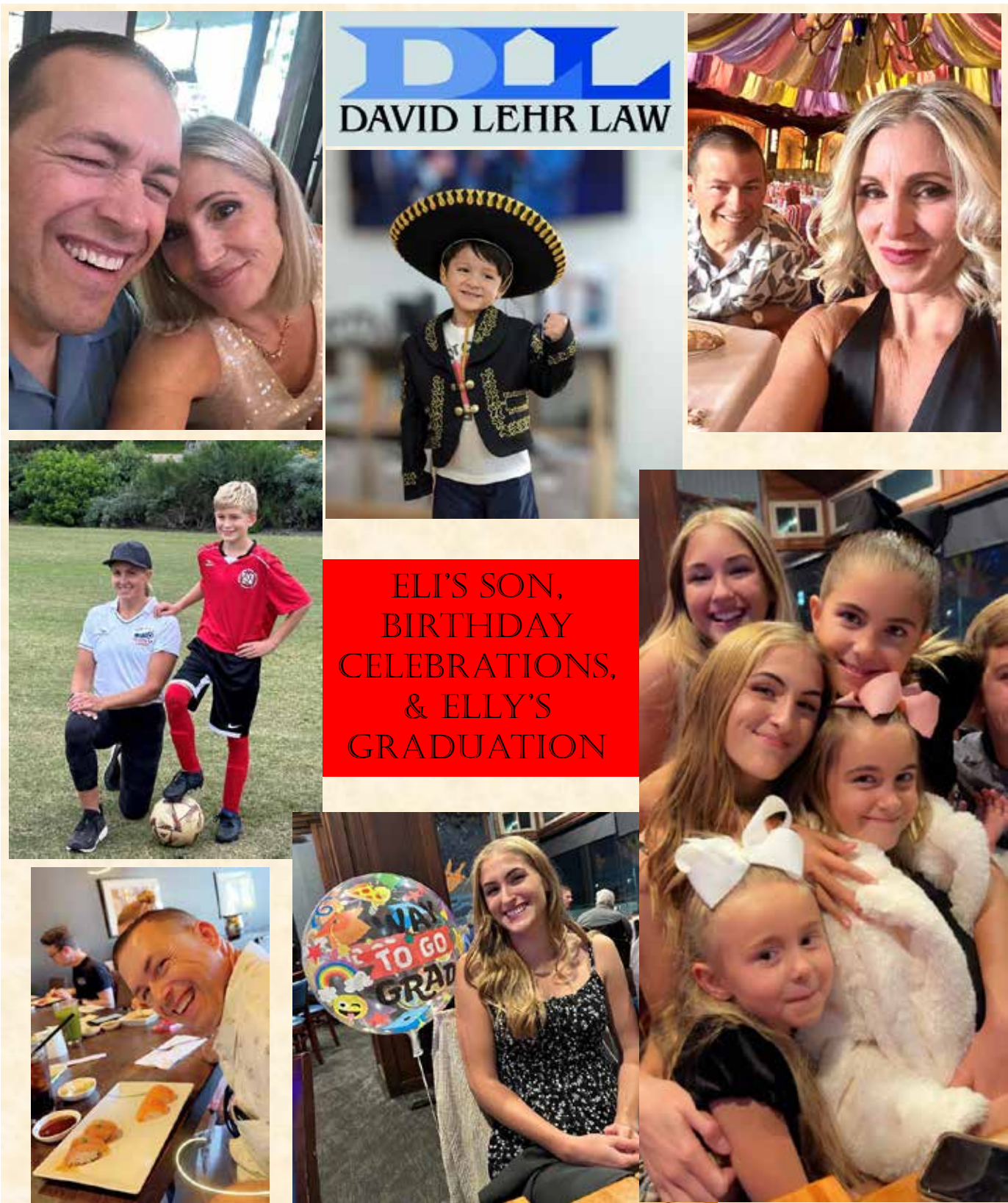
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