



# CITATIONS

A P R I L - T W O T H O U S A N D T W E N T Y F I V E



## JUDGE CARLA ORTEGA RETURNS TO CENTRAL COAST ROOTS TO SERVE VENTURA COUNTY

*By Christal Joy Porter*

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: A BUSY MARCH FOR THE VCBA

By Guillermo "Bert" Partida

## The Court's Strategic Plan

On January 28, 2025, the Ventura County Superior Court announced its four-year strategic plan with a theme of "*Resetting, Reimagining, and Preparing for the future.*" The Court's vision is to maintain the public's trust and confidence by providing equal justice and the highest quality of services for all. The Court's values are Fairness, Access, Integrity and Respect ("FAIR") The full document may be found here [www.ventura.courts.ca.gov/strategic-plan/](http://www.ventura.courts.ca.gov/strategic-plan/).

One of the Court's focus areas is to improve the Court user experience. One immediate effect that I have seen in the civil practice area has been the ability to electronically file case documents in unlimited civil, limited civil, and probate matters. Electronic filing in the Ventura County Superior Court will likely become mandatory in these areas on May 5, 2025. Gone will be the days when you had to get your filing in by 4:00 p.m., as the electronic filing system allows filing near midnight through the Court's designated third-party providers.

In the future, the Court plans improvements to many areas including case management, technology, and staffing.

## Enrobing Ceremony March 14, 2025

On Pi Day, the VCBA recognized **Judge Julia A. Snyder** and **Judge Carla J. Ortega** for their elevation to the bench in a special session of the Superior Court – its Formal Enrobement Ceremony. It was a true honor to represent the VCBA at the ceremony and to congratulate our two newest jurists. This brings our bench makeup to near gender parity with 14 female judges and 15 male judges. As for court staffing, only one bench seat remains unfilled. I also learned that Ventura County Superior Court has been serving the community for 145 years and your Ventura County Bar Association has been serving this community for more than 120 years.

## VCBA continues its Community Outreach

Represents of the VCBA recently attended the Oxnard Union High School District

Career Expo where we met with students and teachers regarding paths in the legal field, the Court's tour program, VCBA's A.S.K. Program and legal referral services, and handed out pamphlets (via QR Code) on the "Kids in the Law," and "So You Turned 18." More than 1,000 students and faculty attended the event.



A special thanks to board member **Randy Sutter** for attending and participating with me in this event.

Best wishes to you all!



**Guillermo "Bert" Partida** practices law at *Slaughter, Reagan & Cole, LLP* in the areas of *Personal Injury Defense, Premises Liability, and Habitability Defense.*



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The Ventura County Superior Court seeks experienced civil attorneys to serve as Judges Pro Tem for the Mandatory Settlement Conference (“MSC”) Calendar which is assigned to **Presiding Judge Matthew P. Guasco** in Courtroom 22. Judges Pro Tem preside over MSCs by stipulation of the parties on those dates when Presiding Judge Guasco is unavailable. All MSCs are conducted via Zoom, so the Judge Pro Tem must be proficient in the use of that technology. MSC Judges Pro Tem serve subject to the provisions of California Rules of Court, rule 10.740, et seq. Experienced civil attorneys interested in serving on the panel of MSC Judges Pro Tem should contact Court Administration at [admin-usc@ventura.courts.ca.gov](mailto:admin-usc@ventura.courts.ca.gov). Judges Pro Tem serve pro bono.”

## 2025 Ventura County and State Mock Trial Winners



This year’s Mock Trial winners in the Ventura County Office of Education’s annual Mock Trial competition, held at the Ventura County Superior Court, were **Trinity Pacific Christian School** (High School Division), and **Valley View Middle School** (Middle School Division). This is

Trinity Pacific’s *sixth* win in the High School Division since 2018, while Valley View posted its first Mock Trial competition win this year.

Not content to rest on its laurels as the Ventura County champion, Trinity Pacific went on to win the California State Mock Trial Championship as well. The Thousand Oaks private school beat out more than 30 competing teams in the state finals for the second year in a row, qualifying for the national finals in Phoenix in early May. Congratulations Trinity Pacific! And – good luck at Nationals!

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# JUDGE CARLA ORTEGA RETURNS TO CENTRAL COAST ROOTS TO SERVE VENTURA COUNTY

By Christal Joy Porter

The Ventura County Superior Court recently welcomed **Judge Carla Ortega** to the bench. Ortega was appointed to the Court by Governor Gavin Newsom on December 16, 2024. Since her appointment, Ortega has been sitting in Department 41 at the Ventura Hall of Justice where she hears civil matters. Ortega brings to the Ventura County bench a wide array of legal, professional, and personal experience.

## Background

Ortega was born and raised in Santa Barbara County, living in the small towns of Buellton and Los Olivos. Ortega obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo with a double concentration in Accounting and Finance. Although Ortega always had a desire to practice law, she pursued accounting, based on her Dad's recommendation. After graduating from Cal Poly, she worked in finance for a couple of years at County Savings Bank in Santa Barbara. During this time, Ortega met her now-husband, Greg Churpek. Ortega soon discovered that finance was not a long-term career path for her, so she followed her desires and attended law school. In 1994, Ortega graduated with her Juris Doctor degree from UCLA's School of Law.

## Legal Career

Ortega's first job out of law school was in Oxnard at the former England, Whitfield, Schroeder & Tredway firm where she practiced tax law. Ortega has fond memories of her time working in Oxnard as she was in the now Morgan Stanley building and her husband worked right across the way in the brown tower. Fueled by her husband's career opportunity in the media sales arena, Ortega pursued legal work in the Los Angeles area. Around July 1995, Ortega started working at the United States District Court, Central District of California, in Los Angeles as a Capital Habeas Staff Attorney. In her twenty-plus year tenure with the federal courts, Ortega was able to participate in various roles, including Attorney Supervisor, Managing Attorney, and Chief Deputy in Case Processing and Administration. Throughout these various roles, Ortega exercised and developed her skillsets to accomplish tasks such as

providing legal analysis of death penalty (and other) cases for twenty-eight (28) federal judges, designing administrative systems for court efficiency, and managing and supervising attorneys. After her time with the federal courts, Ortega transited to the position of Managing Attorney for the Kern County Superior Court where she supervised and managed staff attorneys, as well as provided legal counsel and guidance to the Presiding Judge and judicial officers as needed. Ortega was with the Kern County Superior Court for more than six years. In Kern County, Ortega had a daily commute of nearly two-and-a-half hours – even during COVID. Making the transition from the federal courts to the state courts, Ortega recognized and appreciated the increased interaction with the community/people that state courts foster. When Ortega accepted the Kern County position, she was under the belief that her family would move to be closer to the courthouse in Bakersfield. Due to the changes in her husband's job that were sparked by COVID, moving to Bakersfield was no longer an option, yet the two-plus hour commute through the Grapevine took its toll on Ortega, spurring Ortega's consideration of other opportunities. One of those turned out to be judgeship.

Ortega is thrilled to be back in Ventura County and serving the community from the bench. Although she has spent a significant portion of her career working in Los Angeles and Kern counties, she never truly left the Central Coast. Being raised in a small town, Ortega has never lost her desire to work in more connected communities. Ortega's in-laws live in Ojai, so although her family has lived primarily in Los Angeles County, they have frequently and consistently spent time in Ventura County throughout the years. When Ortega thought about where she truly wanted to serve as a judge, Ventura County was an easy, hands-down choice for her. The County feels like home.

## Initial Goals

Ortega is focused on getting cases on track and to trial if necessary. "Justice delayed is Justice denied" to Ortega. Ortega is a firm believer that addressing cases in a timelier manner helps to preserve evidence and

witness testimony, so the integrity of the legal process is maintained.

## Insights for Barristers/Young Attorneys

When asked about what kept Ortega going when she was spending late nights in downtown Los Angeles at the Federal Courthouse, she shared the following thoughts for young attorneys:

- You have to pay your dues and do the grunt work, so expect to put in the hours.
- Everything you do gets you to your next step. Figure out how to change yourself to get to the next step.
- Accept that you won't always get recognition.
- Training to be a leader is different than doing something really well. Identify where you need to grow and focus your attention there.
- Treat people well because no one can afford to burn bridges. It will never help you to make an enemy.
- Many attorneys are highly stressed and worried. But worrying won't get you anywhere, so concentrate on taking positive action.

## Conclusion

Ortega has always felt a sense of pride in her work, such that if she is putting her name on something, it has to be right – whether or not people will read or see it. Ortega is elated to be on the Ventura County bench and is determined to devote her skills, time, and energy to ensuring that each case in front of her receives the attention and judicial discretion that justice requires.



**Christal Joy Porter**, a graduate of Pepperdine University School of Law, is an attorney with Rodnunsky & Associates, practicing in the areas of trust and estate litigation and estate planning. She can be reached at the office at (818) 737-1090.

# COURT OF APPEAL BALANCES EVOLVING FAMILY NORMS WITH ADOPTION FINALITY IN *C.C. v. L.B.*

By Gregory W. Herring, CFLS

California provides multiple paths for persons with non-biological relationships to children, to become parents and to gain parental-type custodial and visitation rights. The public policies supporting these paths promote non-disruptive initial “parentage” determinations. They also favor stability and continuity in a child’s life if substantial parent-like relationships are developed. This century’s liberalization of the pertinent laws has both *followed* and *facilitated* the evolution of societal perceptions and norms about “what constitutes a family.”

In *C.C. v. L.B.* 2d Civ. No. B331558 (Cal. Ct. App. Nov. 26, 2024), our Second District of the Court of Appeal respected this normative evolution while addressing a San Luis Obispo County parentage case brought by a sperm donor who had previously expressly waived all parental rights pursuant to a stipulated second parent adoption by the biological mother’s wife. The factual complication was that, *based on the donor’s waiver*, the married lesbian mothers for eleven years allowed the donor a parent-like relationship with their daughter.

But as the child neared her twelfth birthday, the girl reported the donor was exhibiting concerning/abusive behavior toward her. The mothers jumped into “protective” mode, denying him further contact in a “time out” toward first evaluating the situation.

The donor aggressively responded, filing a parentage action requesting orders designating him a formal third parent – pushing his way “in” against the family’s reasoned wishes. The mothers retained Herring Imming (“HI”) in defense. Toward avoiding dragging the family through formal discovery and a trial based on the girl’s allegations, HI brought a motion to quash the entire action. It argued that, as a matter of law, the donor should not even get to the point of arguing for parentage of, and reunification with, the child because he lacked standing based on the undisputed fact that he had originally waived all his legal rights concerning the child.

*Could a biological donor, who originally expressly waived all parental rights pursuant to a stipulated judgment of adoption, gain parent status ten years later under California’s later liberalized parentage laws?*

HI said “no.” It argued:

- The donor’s suit was an improper collateral attack on the original judgment of adoption. Under Family Code section 8617, “the existing parent or parents of an adopted child are, from the time of adoption, relieved of all parental duties towards, and all responsibility for, the adopted child, and have no right over the child.”
- He lacked a post-adoption contact agreement (“PACA”) under section 8616.5.
- Even if he could show a PACA, such agreements are limited to subjects of visitation, contact, and the sharing of information – they do not include the creation of parental or custody rights. (See Fam. Code § 8618.5 subd. (b)(2) (A) – (C); Cal. Rules of Court, rule 5.451 subd. (d)(1) – (9); *Adoption of S.S.* (2021) 72 Cal.App.5th 607, 624.)
- Section 7613 prevents biological donors from arguing parentage based on the biological connection.
- He could not establish he is a “presumed parent.” No published decision has held a person who voluntarily consented to a final adoption of a child and terminated all parental rights may subsequently petition for presumed parentage pursuant to section 7611, subdivision (d) [an individual is a presumed parent if he or she “receives the child into their home and openly holds out the child as his or her natural child”].

The donor argued, in the alternative, that the mothers should be equitably estopped from arguing the law since they allowed his historical access *in the first place*. This was the converse of *their* argument that they only allowed access because he waived his rights *in the first place*. *Chicken/egg*.

But asserting “equity” cannot succeed where a statutory scheme already exists:

“Rules of equity cannot be intruded in matters that are plain and fully covered by positive statute. (Citations omitted). When the Legislature has addressed a specific situation, a court cannot wholly ignore the statutory mandate in favor of equitable considerations. Nor will a court of equity ever “lend its aid to accomplish by indirection what the law or its clearly defined policy forbids to be done directly.” (*Adoption of S.S.*, supra, 72 Cal.App.5th at 627.)

... and, the rights, duties, and obligations associated with adoption are entirely statutory.

(See *Adoption of Kay C.* (1991) 228 Cal. App.3d 741, 750 (citations omitted).)

Justice Tari L. Cody (formerly “Judge Cody” of the Ventura County Superior Court), who penned the opinion in *C.C. v. L.B.*, agreed, writing:

“California law does not allow [the donor] to attack the validity of an order he consented to more than a decade ago. (Citations omitted.) Permitting such an attack would ‘trifle with the courts,’ (citations omitted) and infringe on public policy favoring ‘expediency and finality’ in adoptions. (Citations omitted.)”

Thus, in this circumstance, *a permanent waiver is a permanent waiver*. Otherwise, any adoptive parents would be left in fear – even following *permanent* waivers as here – of hearing a knock on the door years later, accompanied by a biological donor’s surprise claims of “parenthood.” A finding that the donor had standing to proceed notwithstanding his express waiver would have had a chilling effect on “open” adoptions throughout the state. It would cause any adoptive parent to be reasonably reluctant to allow post-adoption access by a biological donor.



Especially since many “non-traditional” adoptive families plan on allowing future access by biological donors, they -- as well as “traditional” adoptive parents -- will therefore benefit. The greater institution of adoption, which is founded on “... the legal recognition and regulation of the closest conceivable counterpart of the relationship of parent and child,” ( *C.C. v. L.B.*, supra. (citations omitted)) will, too.



**Greg Herring** is a Certified Family Law Specialist (“CFLS”), and a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and the International Academy of Family Lawyers. He is the managing partner of Herring Imming, LLP (“HI”), a family law firm primarily serving “the 805” with offices in Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo Counties.

His prior articles and blog entries are at [herringimming.com](http://herringimming.com). He and **Ruston Imming**, CFLS, served as trial counsel in this case. They were strongly supported by **Claudia N. Ribet**, with California Complex Appellate Litigation Group, LLP. HI led the successful trial court proceedings, and Ms. Ribet led the successful defense on appeal.



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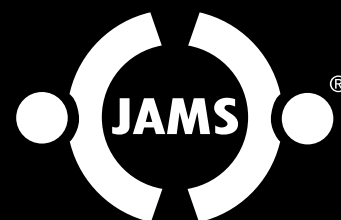


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# RYANNE BAMIEH: A TESTAMENT TO THE POWER OF MOCK TRIAL AND VOLUNTEER MENTORSHIP

By Rachel Coleman



The Mock Trial Competition in Ventura County was recently held at the Ventura County Superior Court, which required many hours of volunteer time over two weekends and in preparation for the competition. Mock Trial is specifically designed to teach students the inner workings of trial practice through first-hand experience. Student teams are provided with a hypothetical case to study, while they conduct legal research, receive guidance and advice from volunteer attorneys on courtroom procedures and trial preparation, and compete against one another by presenting their case before a volunteer judge. The students portray all the roles in the hypothetical case including pretrial counsel, prosecution, defense counsel, witnesses, bailiffs, court reporters, court journalists, and court artists.

Many reading this article volunteered this year, or have in the past, either as a scorer, attorney-coach or Presiding Judge. Spending eight hours at VCSC on a Saturday, or many months coaching a team, is often a thankless task, but your volunteer efforts have made lasting impacts on the students and the local legal community. One of the most successful Mock Trial students from Ventura County is local Santa Barbara attorney **Ryenne Bamieh**. All the hours spent by volunteers contributed to her success, not only in Mock Trial, but also in her decision to attend law school and in her current career path. Bamieh recently took a

position as Deputy Public Defender for the County of Santa Barbara. She anticipates starting a position as a federal law clerk on the Ninth Circuit in Pasadena, CA in August 2025.

Bamieh participated in Mock Trial as a student in high school, while in college, and in law school and has competed at local, state, and national levels. During her high school years at La Reina High School, she participated in Mock Trial from 2010 to 2014. La Reina won the Ventura County competition in all four of the years she participated. She was team captain in 2014 and won MVP in her team's internal awards.

La Reina won the state competition in 2011, 2012 and 2013. In 2013, Bamieh was honored with an award as the best pretrial motion attorney in the entire state of California! In 2013, La Reina placed second at the national competition in New Mexico, where Bamieh was the team captain.

In her Mock Trial journey through high school, Bamieh started off portraying a clerk, progressed to attorney, pretrial attorney, and finally to presenting closing arguments. Bamieh recalls being coached at La Reina by an incredible team of attorney-coaches such as **Jean Wentz, Rick Wentz, Danielle De Smeth, Nayantara Bhushan, Amanda Mundell** and many others as well as the faculty advisor Elizabeth Harlacher. **Ron Bamieh**, her dad, also was an attorney-coach at La Reina, an arrangement that led to many dinner-table arguments about the Evidence Code.

Bamieh attended Stanford from 2014 to 2018 where the team made it to the national competition all four years and where she presented closing arguments for the team each year. Of note, she won an All-American Award at Nationals in her senior year. She fondly recalls being coached at Stanford by the incredible Thom Scher, who passed away unexpectedly in 2021. "He was a real force and an incredible human. He also coached the team that beat my team at the state competition my senior year of high school, a loss that still haunts me! It was a unique experience to go from fierce adversaries to working on the

same team, especially because Thom, like me, was extremely competitive. During my time at Stanford, Thom became a valued mentor and close friend of mine, and we stayed in touch after my graduation. I am so grateful that I got to know him and learn from him."

Growing up, Bamieh did not think that she would choose a career as an attorney. She credits her experience in Mock Trial with getting her interested in the law, and in trial work in particular. She explains, "Mock Trial taught me that trials are all about telling a story. When I did Mock Trial, I loved the practices where we all were brainstorming and strategizing to develop a case theory and to figure out how to present that theory in a compelling way, and that's still my favorite part of my job now." During her time at Stanford, she also interned at Brooklyn Defender Services in Brooklyn, New York, an experience which led to her interest in public defense work.

As Bamieh attended Yale Law School during the COVID-19 pandemic, she was not able to compete at the law school level as she had hoped. Despite this, she won an award in Yale's internal Mock Trial competition and also participated on Yale's team in various competitions, including the National Trial Competition, sponsored by the American College of Trial Lawyers and hosted by the Texas Young Lawyers Association and the Student Trial Advocacy Competition hosted by the American Association for Justice.

Bamieh says that "participating in Mock Trial helped me immensely with my personal development. It built my confidence in public speaking. It taught me that if you work hard and go after your goals you can achieve almost anything – especially if you have a team working along with you!" She brings what she learned to her current job as a Deputy Public Defender. Mock Trial made her comfortable in the courtroom in front of the judge and the jury. It gave her confidence in knowing how to approach cross and direct examination of witnesses and prepared her for how to conduct herself in front of a jury. She also feels she has a "strong understanding of the Evidence Code which she applies to



her job every day,” thanks to her years of practicing in the evidence code in Mock Trial. To date, Bamieh has conducted two criminal misdemeanor trials as a Deputy Public Defender.

Her dad, who was also her attorney-coach at La Reina, was able to come and watch her conduct parts of her two trials. It was a full circle moment for her because when she was at La Reina, her team regularly scrimmaged at the Santa Barbara Superior Court with her dad coaching the team. “It was a surreal moment for me to conduct a real trial in the same courthouse as the Mock Trial scrimmages, in front of my coach (dad) ten years later.”

Bamieh had the opportunity to help her brother Sam prepare for his first mock trial competition this year. Sam, a junior at Ventura High School, was an attorney for the Ventura High School Mock Trial team. Bamieh said, “It was awesome to get to share an activity that both my dad and I love so much with my brother, and I hope to help him even more next year.”

Bamieh recommends that all attorneys should get involved in Mock Trial, even if you can only spare a few hours to volunteer as a scorer. Mock Trial is an uplifting activity for both the students and the volunteers. It teaches civil values, the inner workings of the justice system, public speaking skills and instills confidence in the students. From her own perspective as an attorney scorer this year, it was inspiring to see high school students interested in the justice system. It gives attorneys a different point of view on trial advocacy. She also pointed out that out of her teammates at La Reina, there are currently at least 5 attorneys (including her).

Some of the best memories come from her participation in Mock Trial. She made many lasting friendships including with other students, her best friends, and the attorney volunteers who remain important mentors for Bamieh. There is no doubt that making the time to volunteer for Mock Trial has a lasting impact on the students and the local legal community.



**Rachel Coleman**  
handles civil and family law matters with Siegel Law. She can be reached at [rachel@seigelaw.com](mailto:rachel@seigelaw.com).

## WOMEN LAWYERS SPRING MIXER

*Photos: Sandra Rubio*



## MEMBER PROFILE: TED MECHTENBERG, *Partner, Da Vega Fisher Mechtenberg LLP* By VCBA Staff



**Ted Mechtenberg** brings a practical, problem-solving mindset to his work as a partner at Da Vega Fisher Mechtenberg LLP, where he represents plaintiffs in personal injury and employment matters. With a legal career spanning over two decades, he's drawn to the challenge of figuring out what went wrong, and *why*.

A member of the California Bar since 2002 and the Ventura County Bar Association since around 2012, Mechtenberg began his career in insurance coverage and bad faith litigation before shifting to the plaintiff side. He earned his law degree from Washington University School of Law in St. Louis and holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame.

Originally from Ridgecrest, Mechtenberg now calls Ventura home. He has three teenage sons, all students at Ventura High School, and shares his household with two Sheepadoodles. When he's not practicing law, he can often be found on a soccer field, where he still plays three to four times a week, or hiking the local trails above Ventura.

Creative pursuits also play a role in his life. Few might guess that Mechtenberg enjoys pottery, particularly throwing clay pots on the wheel. It's a different kind of problem-solving—quiet, focused, and hands-on.

He's a longtime soccer enthusiast and loyal fan of Notre Dame football. His go-to local restaurant is Paradise Pantry, and he names the Eastern Sierras as a favorite summer escape. If he had the chance, he'd sit down for a conversation with Joe Strummer of The Clash, an icon whose perspective, much like Mechtenberg's, blends grit with curiosity.

*Editor's Note: A "Sheepadoodle" dog is a cross between the Old English Sheepdog and a Poodle, known for its affectionate personality and low-shedding coats.*

## MEMBER PROFILE: MICHAEL OCAMPO, *Partner, Nelson Comis Kettle & Kinney, LLP*



For **Michael Ocampo**, the practice of law is more than a profession—it's a purposeful pursuit rooted in service, challenge, and integrity. A partner at Nelson Comis Kettle & Kinney, LLP, Ocampo has built his legal career focused primarily on family law. His professional journey, however, spans multiple practice areas, including general liability defense, employment law on both the defense and plaintiff sides, and a formative stint with the Ventura County Department of Child Support Services.

A California Bar member since 2015 and part of the Ventura County Bar Association since 2018, Ocampo is a proud contributor

to the Family Law Bar Board. He earned his J.D. from the University of West Los Angeles after completing his undergraduate studies at UC Riverside.

Raised in Santa Clarita and now residing in Oxnard, Ocampo brings a grounded, approachable presence to the legal community. He's drawn to the law not only for its intellectual rigor and the respect it commands but also for its potential to help people through some of life's most difficult moments. If he could interview one historical figure, it would be the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

When asked what he values most, Ocampo's response is simple but telling: peace of mind. It's a fitting sentiment for someone who manages the emotional intricacies of family law in such a high-charged practice field.

Beyond the courtroom, Ocampo is active. He finds balance through high-intensity workouts, Muay Thai, yoga, and surfing. He shares his home with his partner, two stepdaughters, and two dogs – Ollie, an Australian Shepherd, and Kai, a Pomeranian. For downtime, he enjoys

unwinding with a book at a local coffee shop or a nap in a hammock by the beach.

Ocampo also embraces his individuality with a passion for motorcycles (he owns two Harley-Davidsons), and expresses himself through body art. His ideal dinner would be sushi, or eating at one of his favorite local spots like Taqueria Cuernavaca or Rice by Mama. His media picks range from *Forrest Gump* and *Happy Gilmore* to *Suits* and *Shark Tank*.

A fan of both basketball and football, O'Campo says that if he weren't a lawyer, he'd likely be coaching high school sports. His favorite vacation destinations, which include the Philippines, Costa Rica, and Hawaii, reflect his love for vibrant cultures and natural beauty.

When it comes to the law itself, he cites Family Code section 3020 as his favorite statute, a nod to his deep commitment to family law and the best interests of children. His favorite quote, "What we do in life ripples in eternity," echoes the kind of lasting impact he strives to make both personally and professionally.





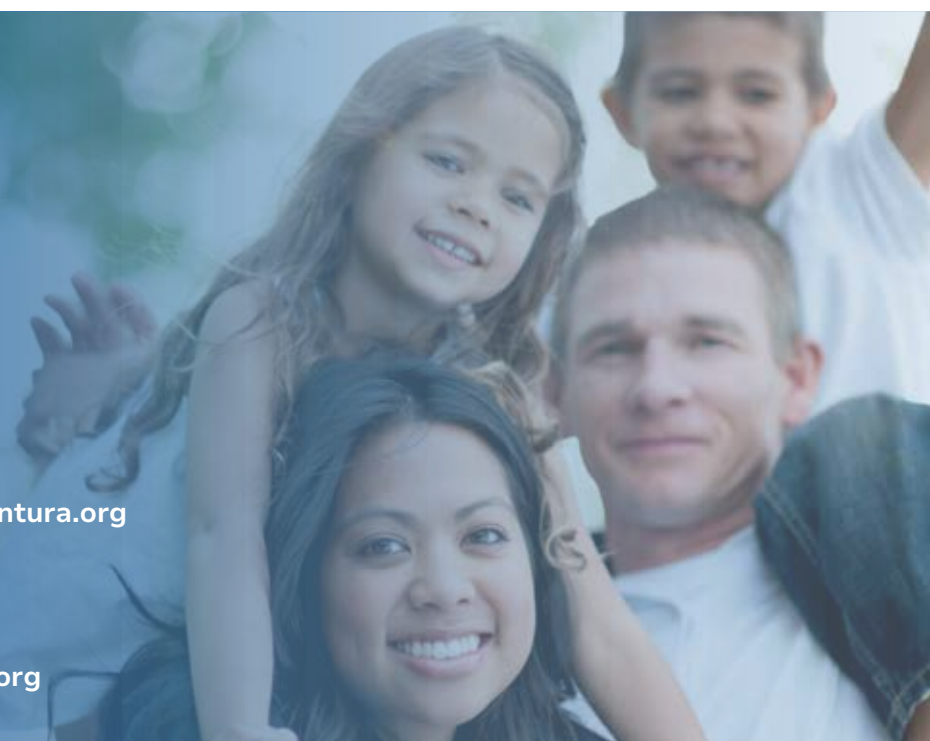
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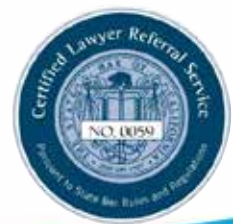
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