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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Kristine Tijam

One of the most rewarding parts of my career is having the honor of teaching law students. It is a privilege to help contribute to the development of the next generation of attorneys, judges, and other legal professionals. The most senior class of law students I have taught just recently received their Juris Doctor degrees. At the time I am writing this article, those students are less than two weeks away from taking the February 2026 bar exam. I look forward to hearing good news from my former students and sharing in their pride and excitement as they embark in the next chapter of their professional lives.

I took the California bar exam in February 2018, two months after graduating from law school. At that time, we all had to take the bar exam in-person. I still have vivid memories from those two days of testing, including taking the exam at the Pasadena Convention Center and staying only a few steps away at the Sheraton Hotel (which has since been rebranded). In May 2018, I finally received my results and was able to breathe a sigh of relief after seeing my name on the pass list. I am sure that many will agree that the wait for bar results felt like the longest three to four months of our lives up to that point.

Many changes have affected the California bar exam over the last few years. In October 2020, the bar exam was postponed and administered remotely for the first time, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the California Supreme Court and State Bar formed the Blue Ribbon Commission on the future of the California Bar Exam ("BRC"). In April 2023, the BRC issued a report recommending that California continue to develop and reform its own bar examination, and *not* adopt a new "NextGen Exam" by the National Conference of Bar Examiners ("NCBE"), which is scheduled to debut in some states in 2026. Later that year, the California State Bar then proposed alternative pathways to attorney licensure, which would have included departing from the traditional bar exam. However, the California Supreme Court denied the proposal and directed the State Bar to reform the California bar exam that would continue to test California-specific subjects.

In 2024, the State Bar of California entered into an \$8.25 million, five-year exam development agreement with Kaplan. That agreement authorized Kaplan to create multiple-choice, essay, and performance test questions for the California Bar Exam. This replaced the NCBE Multistate Bar Examination ("MBE") portion of the bar exam, which had been in use for decades prior. (Notably, the MBE will be phased out as a standalone option by July 2028.) The California State Bar explained that its transition to Kaplan was, among other reasons, a cost-saving measure. Specifically, the State Bar was attempting to help close a significant gap in its Admissions Fund, which was projected to reach insolvency in 2026, absent further efforts to reduce costs. The bar exam changes were estimated to result in annual cost savings of up to \$3.8 million in exam-related expenses. Aside from financial reasons, the State Bar also cited a desire to offer remote examination options that could be facilitated by the contract with Kaplan.

The first California bar exam following the new agreement with Kaplan was administered in February 2025. Unfortunately, that exam suffered from a plethora of significant issues, which have been well documented online and through various news reports. The problems consisted of extensive technical issues, delays, poorly written questions that were drafted by non-attorneys with some utilization of artificial intelligence, and other irregularities. After further investigations and efforts to address the issues, the California Supreme Court ultimately issued an en banc ruling on May 2, 2025, which adjusted the required raw passing score and further ordered that the MBE be used for the multiple-choice portion of the test for the July 2025 bar exam.

The ongoing uncertainty with the California bar exam has certainly garnered the attention and advocacy from many legal organizations and professionals. The California State Bar subsequently offered proposals for California to abandon the current version of the California bar exam, to instead review various alternatives. The State Bar requested that the Committee of Bar Examiners ("CBE") choose

from the following three options: (1) Continue to develop a California Bar Exam as recommended by the BRC report mentioned above; (2) Abandon a California Bar Exam and adopt the NextGen Exam that will begin implementation in 2026; or (3) Adopt a shortened one-day exam planned by the Nevada State Bar for 2027 that is a highly reduced version of the current exam and removes significant portions including the entire essay section and half of the multiple choice section.

In response to the State Bar's proposals, the Los Angeles County Bar Association ("LACBA") prepared a detailed letter. Gil Peles, the co-chair of the Future of Lawyering Committee at the LACBA, invited VCBA and other bar associations to consider joining in on the letter. Ventura County attorney, **Mark Lester**, was also involved in the preparation of the draft letter and the process. The letter took issue with the rushed decision-making process, as well as the proposed alternatives that have not been proven to be successful or beneficial for California, and would incur substantial financial costs. The Ventura County Bar Association's Board of Directors ultimately voted to join the letter. At least 37 other attorney organizations (many of which are county bar organizations throughout the state) also joined. A link to the full letter was sent via email to all VCBA members on January 15, 2026.

At a meeting on January 23, 2026, the State Bar Board of Trustees and CBE selected two bar exam options for further research that should go into effect in 2028. The first plan could have the State Bar administer the NextGen Uniform Bar Examination without a California-specific component. The other possibility was to return to using questions developed by Kaplan. Changes to a different bar exam or vendor require an 18-month to two-year notice period. Consequently, the State Bar must finalize its recommendation to the Supreme Court with sufficient time for the Court to make its decision in July 2026. More details from this meeting are available at the following link: <https://www.calbar.ca.gov/news/board-and-cbe-approve-options-2028-bar-exam>.

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

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Most recently, the February 2026 bar exam was administered exclusively in-person, and again utilized the MBE created by the NCBE for the multiple-choice portion. The future of the California Bar Exam and pathways to licensure will certainly continue to be hotly contested. We should expect further developments on this issue in the near future. Although the bar exam and licensure are already in the past for many of us, our advocacy on these issues is necessary for the sake of the future of our profession, the public’s access to justice, and ensuring that California maintains appropriate standards for licensure.



Kristine Tijam is a civil litigation attorney at Procter, Shyer & Winter, LLP and an adjunct law professor at The Colleges of Law. Her practice focuses on representing cities,

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The Judicial Evaluations Committee is seeking two attorney candidates to join its team. The mission of the JEC is to assist the Governor and the electorate in the judicial selection process by providing independent, comprehensive, accurate, and fair evaluations of judicial candidates and thereby promote a California judiciary of quality and integrity. The JEC evaluates all candidates for Ventura County Superior Court judgeships.

This evaluation is separate from the evaluation conducted by the State Bar of California Judicial Nominees Evaluation Commission. The committee is comprised of a cross-section of 13 lawyers from the Ventura County legal community.

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The California Academy of Appellate Lawyers is proud to announce the opening of the application period for the 2026-2027 Fellowship Program.

The Fellowship Program has two main goals:

- (1) To increase the diversity of participants in the Academy's educational and social programs, and
- (2) To introduce the Academy to appellate lawyers for future candidacy.

The following qualifications will be considered in selecting participants in the Fellowship Program:

- (1) Good character and professional reputation,
- (2) Outstanding appellate skills and ability, and
- (3) A continuing commitment to quality appellate practice.

To qualify for candidacy, a Fellow must have been a member of the California Bar for at least 3 years and must spend a substantial amount of time on appellate work in a typical year.

Additionally, the Academy will consider an applicant's contribution to the diversity of participants in the Academy's programs, which includes (but is not limited to) geographic location, area of practice, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.

The application period will be open through April 6, 2026. To apply, please go to <https://calappellate.org/fellowship-program/fellowship-application>

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A PROFILE ON COMMISSIONER MATTHEW NEMERSON

“BALANCING THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH
PROTECTING OUR LOCAL CITIES.”

By Benjamin L. Baumer and Brian C. Israel

A sense of pride envelops Ventura County Superior Court **Commissioner Matthew Nemerson** as he enters the Hall of Justice to his chambers every morning. Born and raised in Ventura, he “loves giving back to the community,” and he sees his role as Commissioner as a means to do so.

His desire to serve the community to make it a better place was an idea that was instilled in him at a young age by his parents. Nemerson’s late mother, Louise, was a social worker who taught him the importance of being fair and kind to people, especially those who didn’t have all the advantages he had growing up. As an adult he was further inspired by his dad’s late partner Betsy, also a social worker, who always encouraged and supported his goals. His dad was a doctor who found great joy in treating patients so they could be healthy and enjoy their best lives. He credits them with inspiring him to go into the legal profession and makes it a goal to treat individuals in his courtroom with dignity, grace, and respect.

Prior to being sworn in as a Commissioner, Nemerson served as a Public Defender throughout his legal career. A proud Bruin, Nemerson graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles before earning his J.D. degree from Pacific McGeorge School of Law.

After law school, his career started in earnest as an extra help attorney with the Ventura County Public Defender. From there he moved to the Fresno County Public Defender’s Office as a misdemeanor attorney. In Fresno, Nemerson carried an immense caseload and gained a reputation as a tireless advocate for his clients, securing trial victories and negotiating favorable plea agreements as he eventually transitioned to a felony attorney, before finally becoming a major crimes attorney.

After an opportunity arose to return home, Nemerson was welcomed back to the Ventura County Public Defender’s Office where he served as a felony attorney prior to his appointment as Commissioner. Nemerson was sworn in as Commissioner on January 7, 2025. Reflecting on his first

year, “it’s been the honor of a lifetime to be a Ventura County Commissioner.”

Hundreds of people come through Nemerson’s court room every week, many in times of crisis, and his desire to become a Commissioner was rooted in, “...balancing the rights of individuals with protecting our local cities. I wanted to do the right thing for the community.”

As for attorneys who practice before him, including young attorneys, Nemerson’s advice is to be thorough in knowing your case and to be prepared in your case review and knowledge of applicable statutes. Further, tardiness, inappropriate attire, and chewing gum in court are things that he warns against. He especially recommends against driving while you are appearing in court via Zoom.

One legal achievement that he is proud of was becoming a certified criminal law specialist. Nemerson considers himself a lifelong learner and studying for the certification was rewarding. He also enjoys all the learning and knowledge that has come in his time as Commissioner.

When Nemerson is not in Courtroom 10 hearing criminal and unlawful detainer calendars, he can be found playing guitar and piano, or enjoying a nice hot tub “soak.”



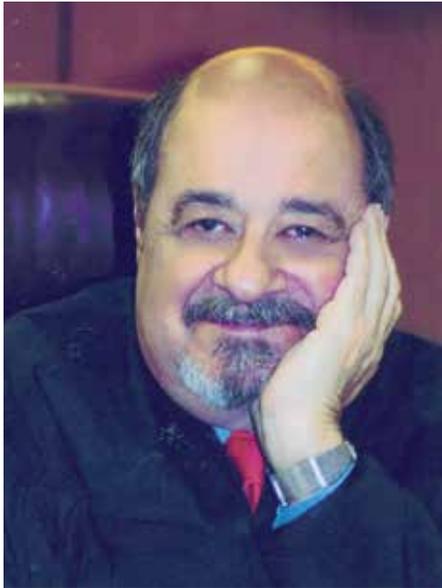
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REMEMBERING JUDGE ALLAN L. STEELE (1929-2026)

By Berta Defren Steele



Honorable Allan L. Steele, Judge (retired), Superior Court of California, Ventura County Bench, permanently left the building Saturday, January 17, 2026.

Comedian and consummate storyteller; lover of Latin music and dance, and big band jazz. Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, the Nicholas brothers, Bob Fosse, Tommy Dorsey, Harry James, Xavier Cugat, Frank Sinatra, Dick Haymes, Sarah Vaughn, and, of course, Woody Allen - these were among his favorite artists.

Born August 8, 1929, Alfred Leonard Skolnick was raised in Brooklyn, graduated Tilden High School, attended Brooklyn College, and received his law degree from Brooklyn Law School. He worked as a law clerk in New York City before changing his name to Allan L Steele and moving to Los Angeles In 1957. "After all," he always said, "I could starve in warm, tropical Los Angeles as well as in cold, filthy New York." Unassailable thinking....

After passing the California bar exam, Steele became a personal injury trial lawyer, likening a trial to putting on a play. He loved the trial scene in the musical "Chicago." Later he "drifted" into family law and became a specialist. Steele also practiced workers compensation law. In 1965, Steele moved his family to Thousand Oaks, becoming the third partner in a Ventura County law firm.

While raising his family, Steele was a founder of Temple Etz Chaim in Thousand Oaks and served as president of the congregation. He was instrumental in building the edifice and involved in hiring Rabbi Shimon Paskow. He loved trying to make the Rabbi laugh while he was conducting services by telling jokes in asides. Rabbi returned the favor when Steele was giving the congregational announcements.

In December 1982, Governor Jerry Brown appointed Steele to the Superior Court of California, Ventura County bench when, he joked, he became honorable. Judge Steele was enrobed in January 1983. He served five years as judge in Family Law, then in Law and Motion, and, finally, on the Criminal Court bench. He once said that for every sentencing code he had to memorize, he lost a joke. He still had a large block of stories and jokes left that he loved to tell, in and out of the courtroom.

Everyone knew when Judge Steele was picking a jury because of the laughter coming from his courtroom. He put everyone at ease with humor while reminding them that a trial itself was very serious business. Judge Steele believed in justice, fairness and mercy, to which everyone in his courtroom was entitled.

Judge Steele enjoyed traveling the world, particularly cruising on small ships. He loved cars, especially his Miata. He liked going to live theater, enjoying all genres of plays and concerts. He was a lifelong Dodgers fan, holding season tickets for over 35 years. He liked learning about new ideas, new technology, and new products.

In retirement, Judge Steele loved sitting in his backyard oasis, soaking up the sun and watching the "wildlife." He particularly enjoyed meeting for lunch with The Gang, other retired (and not) colleagues. His wit and comic writing skills were in evidence almost until the end of his life. After his last visit to the emergency room shortly before his death, Judge Steele was creating a comic riff on those experiences.

Judge Steele is survived by his wife of 43 years, Berta Defren Steele; Michael (Teresa), Jeffrey (Linda), and Evan (Larissa), his sons with Renee, his first wife; stepdaughter, Naomi Lubick (Matthew); nine grandchildren and one great grandchild.

A memorial service and luncheon will take place Monday, March 23rd at 11:00 a.m. at Temple Beth Torah, 7620 Foothill Rd., Ventura. Due to security concerns, reservations must be made. Please email jalsmemorial@gmail.com to let us know you are attending.

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MARCH MADNESS OR JUST PLAIN MADNESS? UPDATES ON RECENT NAME IMAGE & LIKENESS LITIGATION

By *Christal Joy Porter*



Whether you are locked into the NCAA March Madness brackets or you would rather do spring cleaning than watch a basketball game, it is good to be aware that NCAA Division 1 athletics, a multi-billion dollar U.S. industry, is undergoing changes which have shocked fans and garnered the attention of the White House and Congressional officials.

For over a decade, antitrust litigation surrounding student athlete compensation and restrictions on profit from the use of student-athletes' name, image, and likeness (NIL) has been brewing in the courts. In response to the ongoing litigation, many states passed laws in favor of NIL payments to student athletes. California was the first state to enact such statutes and thirty-one states followed with similar legislation. (See *March 2024 CITATIONS* article for details on the CA NIL statutes). In 2021, the United States Supreme Court made a ruling in favor of student athletes (*NCAA v. Alston*, 594 US ___ (2021)) which was in essence the first step to the current dismantling of NCAA restrictions surrounding student athlete compensation. Before the Supreme Court's decision in *Alston*, two cases,

House v. NCAA and *Oliver v. NCAA*, were initiated by former and current student athletes against the NCAA and Power Five Conferences. These cases alleged the NCAA's prohibition against compensation to student athletes for their NIL to be a violation of the Sherman Act. The two cases were consolidated as *In re College Athlete NIL Litigation* and included certified classes of student athletes. In May 2024, *In re College Athlete NIL Litigation* reached a settlement agreement which was approved on June 6, 2025.

***In re College Athlete NIL Litigation* Settlement Terms**

The settlement agreement aims to resolve *House*, *Oliver* and two additional cases, *Hubbard v. NCAA* and *Carter v. NCAA*. The settlement agreement addresses three (3) past damages classes comprised of previous student athletes who participated in Division 1 athletics between June 15, 2016, to September 15, 2024, and one (1) future injunctive relief class. The damages classes will be entitled to compensation based on expert Dr. Daniel Rascher's economic model of lost third-party NIL compensation. The past damages classes

includes over 390,000 former Division 1 athletes who will split about \$2.5 billion.

The injunctive relief class agreement has three main features.

(1) **Revenue Sharing** – Each Power Five member institution will be allowed to share a portion of athletic revenues with athletes up to 22% of the “average shared revenue” generated by Power Five member institutions. For the 2025-2026 academic year, institutions can distribute \$20.5 million (not including grant-in-aid) to student athletes. Each institution has the discretion to determine how these funds will be distributed amongst the student athletes. As we have seen in the last year, student athletes of high revenue-generating sports like football and basketball have received the majority of the revenue-sharing funds.

(2) **Roster Caps** - The NCAA will institute caps on the number of students allowed to compete on each team (roster caps) in place of eliminating the cap on the number of scholarships each institution is permitted to award student athletes. Although the roster cap limits the number of student-athletes on a team, getting rid of the scholarship limits provides the opportunity for all team participants to receive a scholarship.

(3) **NIL Deal Enforcement** - The NCAA and conferences will have the ability to implement rules designed to ensure third party NIL deals are for a “valid business purpose related to the promotion or endorsement of goods or services” and are not “pay-for-play” compensation. Athletes and institutions are required to report any third-party NIL contracts worth \$600 or more to “NIL Go.” NIL Go is a designated reporting entity created to determine whether third-party NIL deals “are made with the purpose of using student-athletes' NIL to advance a valid

business purpose and within a reasonable range of compensation.” As of December 31, 2025, more than \$127 million in NIL deals have been approved through the NIL Go platform, and NIL Go has reviewed 17,321 total deals in the six months since its inception in June 2025. 524 deals valued at \$14.95 million were reviewed and not cleared during the first six months of NIL Go. That is a mere 3% of NIL deals that were rejected through NIL Go.

College Sports Commission (CSC): Also included in the terms of the settlement agreement is the creation of a “designated enforcement entity” that will oversee compliance with the terms of the settlement agreement. The College Sports Commission (CSC) was established around June 2025 to act as an independent body separate from the NCAA to implement and enforce settlement terms governing revenue sharing, third party NIL deals, and roster limits. CSC oversees NIL Go submissions.

Objections to the Approval of the Settlement Agreement

After the Federal District Court issued the approval of the settlement agreement, several parties filed appeals to the Court’s ruling. Due to the appeals, the Damages classes payments have not yet been made and are pending the appeal, but the injunctive relief terms have been implemented and went into effect on July 1, 2025.

Basis for Objections. The majority of objections to the approval of the settlement agreement surround Title IX concerns and the unfair distribution of settlement funds to male athletes versus female athletes. Under the Damages classes settlement, about 400,000 previous student athletes will receive a share of \$2.576 billion. The calculation used to determine this settlement amount created by expert,

Dr. Rascher, practically provides the majority of the settlement funds to be issued to previous men’s football and basketball student athletes. Proponent parties of the settlement agreement argue that Federal Code of Civil Procedure Rule 23’s flexible standard allows for the unequal distribution of settlement funds because treating class members *equitably* does not mean treating them *equally*. Additionally, Proponents argue that Title IX limitations do not apply to the terms of the settlement because Title IX regulations refer to financial aid/athletic scholarships, and do not encompass all student-athlete benefits.

Local attorney **Panda Kroll’s** partner, **Patrick A. Bradford** of Bradford Edwards LLP makes a compelling objection to the settlement agreement on behalf of his client that surrounds the premise that notice requirements and due process were not met, specifically to Black class members who “constitute a majority of the D1 money-making sports.” Additionally, Bradford argues that the settlement agreement attempts to accomplish too much by radically expanding the Damages settlement class to include all Division 1 athletes, not providing heightened scrutiny the settlement class and structural conflicts require, approving exorbitant class Counsel fees, extending the injunctive relief class to last up to twenty years, and basis the settlement amount on an inadequate damages valuation.

Current Impact of Settlement Approval

There have been a lot of mixed sentiments surrounding the approval of the *In re College Athlete NIL Litigation* settlement agreement and implementation of the injunctive relief class terms. College sports teams are getting completely new rosters of players every season due to lax transfer rules and the ability student athletes now have to offer their talents to the highest bidder.

On July 24, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order “Saving College Sports” claiming the recent NIL litigation and ability for third parties to engage in compensation to student athletes has created an “out-of-control, rudderless system... Absent guardrails to stop the madness and ensure a reasonable, balanced use of resources across collegiate athletic programs that preserves their educational and developmental benefits, many college sports will soon cease to exist.

A national solution is urgently needed to prevent this situation from deteriorating beyond repair and to protect non-revenue sports, including many women’s sports, that comprise the backbone of intercollegiate athletics, drive American superiority at the Olympics and other international competitions, and catalyze hundreds of thousands of student-athletes to fuel American success in myriad ways.”

Although it is uncertain whether the new compensation structure for Division 1 athletes will cause deterioration beyond repair, one thing that is certain is that there is no going back to the way things “used to be” in college athletics. Even if the approval of the settlement agreement is reversed, the NCAA and its member institutions will continue to evolve limitations and structures of student-athlete compensation until a balanced solution can be found. Buckle up, it may be a bumpy ride.



Christal Joy Porter, a graduate of Pepperdine University School of Law and former NCAA collegiate athlete (Rice Women’s Basketball 2011-2015), 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.

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HANNA MALCO, ESQ

Hanna is an associate attorney at Negley Law, APC. A Ventura native and fourth-generation resident, she has deep community roots, including service with the National Charity League, volunteering with the Humane Society of Ventura County, and recognition as a Las Patronas Auxiliary Debutante. Hanna earned a B.S. in Business from CSU Channel Islands and a J.D. from Chapman University's Fowler School of Law in 2023. She began her career in tenants' rights and personal injury, advocating for clients affected by uninhabitable housing, auto accidents, and premises liability. She brings that same compassion to family law, guiding clients through emotionally challenging matters. Outside work, Hanna enjoys time with family, her animals, and exploring the outdoors.

Welcome

New Attorneys!



CHANNY RUSSELL, ESQ

Channy is a Ventura-based family law litigator with extensive experience throughout Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Lompoc. She earned her law degree cum laude from Boston University School of Law, where she was a Fulbright fellow and completed a dual degree in International Relations and Conflict Resolution, after graduating from Washington & Lee University. Practicing family law in California since 2020, Channy has successfully represented hundreds of clients in complex matters involving high-asset estates, business interests, separate property claims, domestic violence allegations, custody disputes, prenuptial agreements, and Marvin claims. A former criminal defense attorney, she is known for untangling complex financial issues and forcefully defending wrongly accused clients. Fluent in Spanish, Channy is an active member of multiple California legal organizations and lives in Santa Barbara with her young daughter.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS: ERIC FEINGOLD AND LISA LYTIKAINEN

By Kathleen Mahou



Eric Feingold has practiced in California since 1993 and has been a Ventura County Bar Association member since 1994. He practices with Myers Widders Gibson Jones & Feingold, LLP, handling civil litigation, personal injury, and employment matters, and previously worked in insurance defense and insurance bad faith.

He is a Thomas Jefferson School of Law graduate and attended California State University Chico as an undergraduate. Feingold has served as VCBA President (2017) and has been involved with the VCBA Judicial Evaluations Committee, the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association, and the VCBA Business Litigation section.

Asked why he chose law, he points to the intellectual challenge and to helping people when life gets scary and stressful. His favorite statutes track that mindset: Civil Code section 3520 (“No one should suffer by the act of another”) and Civil Code section 3517 (“No one can take advantage of their own wrong”). While he cherishes these fairness maxims, he also stresses about “EVERYTHING.”



Feingold is Ventura through and through. Ventura is both his hometown and his current city of residence. His favorite local spots are the top of Nordhoff Peak and the cove at C Street, two places that make sense for someone who likes to be outside and moving.

What he values most is time, health, and the love of his family. At home, the love of his wife of 25 years, Shauna, two children - Elliot and Sloane - and a Labradoodle named Olive.

When he is not working, the common thread is motion. Feingold’s favorite way to relax is riding his bikes, and if he were not a lawyer, he would be a bike mechanic. His favorite sports list matches: mountain biking, snowboarding, and surfing, with snowboard cross as the one he likes to watch.

His other favorites are diverse: sushi, *The Godfather*, *The Simpsons*, and, right now, *The Wide Wide Sea* (but previously, *The Stand*). Feingold counts himself among the loyal fans of the old *Ferraro’s* Italian restaurant. “May its memory be a blessing.”

His favorite car is a Porsche 911. Feingold heads to the north shore of Kauai when he can, and would pick Leonardo da Vinci for a dream interview.



Lisa Lytikainen has worked as a Ventura County prosecutor since June 1996 and has been a California lawyer since December 1995. She has been a VCBA member as long as she can remember. She is currently the Chief Assistant District Attorney for the

County of Ventura, serving as second-in-command to District Attorney **Erik Nasarenko**.

Her reason for going to law school is deeply personal. In college, Lytikainen was the victim of a crime, testified at the preliminary hearing, and became fascinated by the criminal justice process. After graduating from the University of Southern California (go Trojans!) she earned her law degree from Santa Barbara College of Law (now Colleges of Law). At the Ventura County D.A.’s office, Lytikainen rose through the ranks, beginning with misdemeanor prosecutions and moving on to felony prosecutions, supervision of the Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse units, appellate work, and teaching. In 2016, she was named Prosecutor of the Year for her leadership in both the office and the courtroom. She also earned a master’s degree in criminal justice in 2021.

Lytikainen has stayed active in the broader legal community through the VCBA Judicial Evaluations Committee, Women Lawyers of Ventura County, the California District Attorneys Association, and the National District Attorneys Association. Outside of work, Lytikainen’s life centers on family and the performing arts. She and her husband, Keith, have been married for 33 years, and they have two adult daughters, one a small business owner in Colorado and the other a junior at Chapman University. Their pets are Lux, a six-year-old fox red Lab, and Luna, a 12-year-old cat.

When asked what she prizes most, Lytikainen points to her family and adds that her mother, sister, and brother-in-law live nearby in Santa Barbara.

Lytikainen relaxes with theater, especially musical theater. If she were not practicing law, she would want to perform in musical theater productions, with the caveat that she “can’t really sing.” She also admits to a quirky fascination with the supernatural, and she plans to resume tap dancing lessons in retirement. Dance has been part of her life for a long time. It is her favorite form of exercise, and she trained in ballet, tap, and jazz when she was younger.

Her Ventura County favorites are downtown Ventura and the eclectic vibe of Main Street.

She picks Café Nouveau for breakfast, and either The Greek or The Little Lion for lunch. Her favorite food is French fries.

For reading and watching, Lyytikainen gravitates toward historical fiction and romantic comedies, and she names *Memoirs of a Geisha* and *Snow Falling on Cedars* as favorites. Lyytikainen says she has no favorite car, but she loves her Tahoe. Paris tops her list of favorite places she has traveled.

If she could interview a historic figure, she would choose Sandra Day O'Connor in the legal realm, and either Barbara Walters or Oprah Winfrey outside it.

The quote she is keeping close right now fits both trial work and real life: "Don't worry. If Plan A doesn't work, there are 25 more letters in the alphabet."



Kathleen "Kat" Mahen is an associate attorney practicing family law with Pachowicz | Goldenring, a PLC, and Managing Editor of CITATIONS. She can be reached at

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