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## Moving forward

### WE MOVE FORWARD BECAUSE THERE'S NO ALTERNATIVE

I was fortunate to recently attend the Western Trial Lawyers Conference in Hawaii. Despite the rigorous screenings and rules that needed to be followed, traveling after months felt like a giant leap forward. After all, we're already well into our second year of coronavirus.

In my travels, I had the opportunity to chat with many people about their experiences over the past year. One such person was a friendly bartender who shared his experience of living through the pandemic. Like millions of people, he lost his job. He also became a father, yet his child's mother was someone he barely knew.

With no job, a new baby, and virtually no connection to the child's mother, he talked of being terrified of the uncertainty he faced. But he told me of how he moved forward because that's what he had to do for himself and his new son. Because he had no job, he had nothing but free time, so he spent it bonding with his son. In the process, he and his son's mother forged a friendship that led to a committed relationship. Today the family is living together and pressing onward.

#### 600,000 Americans have perished

His story reminded me that no matter what, we move forward because we must. We're doing so even though more than 600,000 of our country's men and women perished. To put the losses in perspective, I thought about the fact that states like Wyoming and Vermont, barely have 600,000 residents. In effect, we lost an entire state's worth of people during this pandemic. Yet, we move forward as individuals, as attorneys, as families, and as a country.

We move forward because frankly there's no alternative. But I'd also like to think that we choose to carry on out of a sense of duty. We have a responsibility to those we lost to live fully. We have a duty to those who deserve justice to press on. With staggering losses, heavy hearts, and empathy, we move forward, with advocacy, and with intention.

The Orange County Superior Court is a prime example of how to do this smartly and safely. With the recent lifting of the social-distancing rules affording the opportunity to utilize more of our Orange County courtrooms, the number of civil trials will increase. Yet, the court continues to set health and safety standards and protocols above and beyond exceptional to protect the court personnel, judges, attorneys and members of the public.

As trial attorneys we have an obligation to ensure that justice delayed, does not mean justice denied for our clients. Now, we can press forward with seeking justice for our clients. Likewise, we need to resume our mentorship of young attorneys who have in effect, lost nearly two years of practice. In doing so, OCTLA is working with the Orange County Superior Court to offer a young lawyer Courtroom Etiquette 101 course at the courthouse.

As an organization, we are also moving forward. In the coming weeks, OCTLA will hold its first in-person events since the stay-at-home orders were issued. We are finalizing the details for our first in-person member mixer which will take place on August 13, 2021 at the Tustin Ranch Golf Course. The in-person mixer will be sponsored by OCTLA's 2021

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#### Selected charity: A Walk on Water

I couldn't be prouder that our selected charity this year, A Walk on Water (AWOW), is holding its first in-person Surf Therapy event on July 10th in Huntington Beach, for children with special needs and their families.

#### In-person programs return in September

Starting in September, OCTLA will return to our in-person educational programs. The September program is an interactive program on how to effectively mediate your case, presented from the plaintiff, defense and mediators' perspectives. Then in October, we will resume our Columbus Day Golf Tournament at the El Niguel Country Club, where in addition to the tournament with great raffle prizes, a cocktail reception, dinner, we will have our tournament awards program.

Finally, on November 13, 2021, OCTLA will recognize local trial attorneys for their exceptional trial skills over the past 12 months at our annual Top Gun Awards Program. This year's Top Gun Awards program will be held at the Laguna Cliffs Resort & Spa in Dana Point. Nominations for our 2021 Trial Lawyer of the Year are open and a Nomination form is available at OCTLA.org. Nominations must be received by July 31, 2021 to be considered.

I hope that you will join OCTLA as we press onward, with our mission, events, and charitable endeavors.

