



OCTLA President
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Giving, gratitude and the hope for future success

TOP GUN WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT ANNUAL AWARDS AND CHARITY GALA;
 CHARITABLE GIVING BREAKS RECORD

Beginning in the 1980s, OCTLA launched its now longstanding charitable mission of giving to children and families in need by donating car seats for newborns. Over the years the amount of OCTLA's charitable donations have grown significantly. In conjunction with our Top Gun Awards and Charity Gala, OCTLA continues to break its own record of charitable giving.

On November 13, 2021, OCTLA held its 25th annual Top Gun Awards and Charity Gala. The Gala was held at the Laguna Cliff's Marriott in Dana Point. With over 400 people in attendance, this year's event was a joyful and exciting success. Arriving at the event, the foyer was filled with palpable exhilaration from attendees long awaiting the opportunity to socialize with friends and colleagues. Seeing all the smiling faces of friends along with the glam and glitter of the evening overwhelmed the bittersweetness that came from having OCTLA's first in-person Gala since COVID-19 began.

The charity this year was "A Walk on Water," a non-profit charity that provides surf therapy to children and families in need. A Walk on Water's powerful impact on children and families was brought to life with a few words from young Rocco Keller and his mother, Amy Amaradio, who spoke of how Rocco benefitted from his involvement with the charity.

After the event, several attendees stayed in the foyer and near the after-event coffee and sweets table at the Valet to continue the evening festivities, exchanging photos and enjoying each other's company.



In addition, many gathered in the OverVue Lounge for the after-party hosted by Rizio Lipinsky Law Firm.

None of the evening's successes would be possible without the support of our sponsors and the generous donations from trial lawyers, their families, friends, and sponsors who attended. Also, an enormous thank you to OCTLA for its gracious donation to A Walk on Water. It is with the deepest of gratitude that I say thank you to all of you for your gracious donations and contributions to the event.

In addition, a special thanks to our OCTLA Top Gun Event Committee, Top Gun Selection Committee, and the volunteers who participated before and during the event. Months of preparation and planning go into putting the event together and pulling it off without a hitch. Our Top Gun Event Committee's work begins in the spring by vetting a location and continues through the evening of the event. Our Top Gun Selection Committee spends countless hours reviewing numerous nominees to determine the Award winners. Congratulations to this year's Top Gun winners: Ricardo Echeverria – Personal Injury; Mohammad Eldessouky – Employment Law; Steven D. Hillyard – Medical Malpractice; Greyson Goody –

Young Gun. Also, this year we welcomed Mark P. Robinson, Jr. into the OCTLA Hall of Fame.

Also, thanks to Janet Thornton whose untiring commitment to this organization brings about its success. On behalf of OCTLA, we thank you for all your hard work and steadfast commitment to the organization and making all our Top Gun Award and Charity Galas so special. Finally, thank you to the OCTLA Board this year for your support and dedication to the organization.

As my year as President comes to its end, I am proud to say that one of the last events of my Presidency was an extremely successful event in execution and giving. The silent and live auction items combined with the exceptional auctioneering skills of Keith More and generous donations, raised just over \$210,000 for charity, a new record for the organization. However, records are meant to be broken and I look forward to the future when OCTLA and the Trial Lawyer community breaks this year's record!

Wishing everyone a wonderful Holiday Season and a healthy and happy New Year.

With gratitude for allowing me to serve,

Cynthia A. Craig