



From the President

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HICKS LAW FIRM

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Stronger together

BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE THIS APRIL

As we embrace the energy and renewal that April brings, it's a perfect moment to reflect on the power of community and collaboration. At OCTLA, we understand that our strength lies not only in individual dedication but in our collective efforts to advance justice, mentor the next generation, and give back to our communities. This year, we are proving that we are truly "Stronger Together."

Empowering through education and mentorship

Our commitment to education and mentorship continues to be a cornerstone of OCTLA's mission. The Education Committee, led by chair Alain Kinaly, has already made strides in delivering high-quality, relevant programming. The annual "What's New in Tort and Trial" webinar provided invaluable insights into key appellate and California Supreme Court rulings, equipping members with the knowledge to navigate their practices successfully.

Our first in-person MCLE event of the year in February, held at The Park Club in Costa Mesa, received enthusiastic feedback. The event, titled "Judges and Mediators Review," featured esteemed lawyers Eric Traut, Ricardo Echeverria, and Tom Feher. The panel provided in-depth reviews and valuable insights on various judges throughout Southern California, helping attendees better understand courtroom dynamics and expectations. This move marked a significant transition from our long-standing venue at Tustin Ranch Golf Club, a change that reflected our dedication to enhancing member experiences and providing accessible, engaging spaces for learning. The positive response to the new venue was overwhelming, with members appreciating the modern setting and convenient location.

On March 27th, we hosted another impactful MCLE event titled "Bad Faith in Personal Injury." This exclusive, plaintiff-attorney-only event featured insights from Steven Young, Esq., of the Law Offices of Steven R. Young and Hon. James Crandall (Ret.) of Judicate West. Attendees gained valuable knowledge on navigating the complexities of bad faith in personal injury cases, enhancing their advocacy strategies and legal practices.

It is clear that our commitment to providing dynamic educational experiences is stronger than ever. We look forward to building on this momentum with future events that continue to empower and educate our community.

Mentorship is another area where we see our "Stronger Together" theme come to life. Chair Amber Esposito and the Mentoring Committee have worked tirelessly to foster the next generation of trial lawyers. This year's Summer Internship Program will give five exceptional law students a unique, hands-on experience at leading plaintiff firms. These experiences not only shape the future of our profession but also affirm our commitment to nurturing talent and creating inclusive spaces for growth and learning.

Strengthening our voice

Advocacy remains central to OCTLA's mission. Our Legislative Committee, under the leadership of chair Steve Young, prepared for the Annual CAOC Justice Day in Sacramento, which took place on April 7-8. This critical event empowered us to advocate for policies that uphold justice and protect consumers. We also co-hosted the Night at the Capitol mixer with Capitol City Trial Lawyers, creating opportunities to build relationships and strengthen our collective voice.

Supporting NEGU: Extending our impact beyond the courtroom

One of the most meaningful initiatives of 2025 is our partnership with the Jessie Rees Foundation (NEGU – Never Ever Give Up). NEGU is dedicated to encouraging children fighting cancer to stay strong and positive. Through their JoyJars – filled with toys, games, and activities – they spread hope and joy to children in hospitals across the nation. Under the leadership of chair Allegra Rineer, our Public Relations Committee has worked diligently to integrate this mission into our organization. Throughout the year, OCTLA members will have the opportunity to participate in fundraising, assembling JoyJars, and volunteering their time to support this incredible cause. This partnership underscores the strength of our legal community and our collective commitment to making a difference

beyond the courtroom. We encourage all OCTLA and CAALA members to find ways to engage with NEGU and help spread their inspiring message.

Growing together

Membership growth is not just about numbers – it's about expanding our community's influence and reach. The Membership Committee, chaired by Amber Esposito, is striving to set a record for new memberships this year. By bringing new voices and perspectives into our fold, we ensure that OCTLA remains a vibrant, dynamic organization. We encourage every member to invite a colleague to join our mission.

Looking forward

As we move through the year, exciting events are on the horizon. The Palm Springs Seminar will take place May 2-3, 2025, at the Omni Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa. This event promises to offer invaluable insights from top trial lawyers and industry experts, alongside exceptional networking opportunities. We encourage our CAALA colleagues to join us for this engaging and educational experience.

We are also looking forward to the annual golf tournament on June 6, 2025, at Oak Creek Golf Club in Irvine. This event provides a fantastic opportunity to connect with peers in a relaxed, enjoyable setting while supporting OCTLA initiatives.

Finally, we eagerly anticipate the Top Gun Trial Lawyer of the Year Awards Gala on November 22, 2025, at the Hyatt Regency in Irvine. This prestigious event not only honors excellence but also strengthens our commitment to making a difference. Supporting NEGU through this gala underscores our belief that the power of our community extends far beyond legal victories. We welcome CAALA members to attend and join in supporting this meaningful cause.

Stronger together

This April, let's reaffirm our dedication to each other, our profession, and our community. Every event, mentorship, and advocacy effort contributes to the vibrant, resilient fabric of OCTLA. Together, we can achieve extraordinary things. We are stronger together – today, tomorrow, and always.