



From the President
Clare Lucich
HICKS LAW FIRM



Elevating each other

WOMEN IN LAW MAKING CHANGE

This month's Advocate centers on women in the law – an especially fitting theme given the exciting momentum within OCTLA. On February 5th, OCTLA hosted its first Women in Law event on the rooftop of Lido House, where about 40 women gathered for sunset views, conversation, and laughter. The event was generously sponsored by two outstanding women-owned businesses – KW Court Reporting and Verdict Videos – whose leadership and support reflect the strength of women supporting women in our profession.

My theme this year for the Orange County Trial Lawyers Association is using our voice to make a difference. That theme resonates when we consider the collective voice of OCTLA's women members. When women lawyers come together – not only to advance in their own careers, but to mentor, uplift, provide charitable outreach and advocate for others – the impact extends far beyond the courtroom. It reaches into our community, into the lives of young women who need support, and into the next generation of leaders.

In that spirit, I am thrilled to announce OCTLA's Charity of the Year: The Teen Project. The Teen Project is an extraordinary nonprofit organization that began in Orange County and now serves vulnerable young women across Southern California. Its mission is to provide a transformation for former foster youth and at-risk young women who have survived human trafficking and homelessness, among other difficult life experiences. Through a multitude of resources such as psycho-

therapy, education, housing, and long-term support, The Teen Project offers these young women not just shelter – but a future.

One of its impactful OC offerings is The College House, which serves Transitional Age Youth (ages 18–25) and their children. Each young woman is provided her own bedroom. The average stay is approximately two years. During that time, participants receive educational support, job training, internships, and savings plans – tools that allow them to build real independence.

This year, The Teen Project will be the focus of OCTLA's annual Top Gun event on December 5, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency, Irvine. All proceeds raised from the live and silent auctions will go directly toward supporting this incredible organization and the young women, men, and children it serves. I am personally inspired to work alongside its founder and chief executive officer, Lauri Burns, whose vision has transformed countless lives of women in Orange County and beyond. Her leadership is a powerful example of what it means to use one's voice to make a difference in the community.

OCTLA's charitable mission does not stop there. Earlier this year, we partnered with Michelle West and Susan Kelly of OCTLC for our first charitable event of 2025 – a Habitat for Humanity of Orange County build. OCTLA members joined together with OCTLC to help construct a home for a family in need.

In addition to these charitable initiatives, OCTLA has taken steps to ensure that women's leadership

continues to grow within our own organization. We have formally established an OCTLA Women's Caucus devoted to developing relationships, fostering mentorship, and increasing female leadership within OCTLA and the broader legal community within Orange County. The caucus is intended to create space for collaboration, professional growth, and support – particularly for young lawyers navigating the early stages of their careers.

I am continually inspired by the women who founded and lead these extraordinary charitable organizations, as well as the women within OCTLA who balance demanding legal practices, trials, with meaningful community involvement. I also want to recognize our OCTLA Executive Director, Jennifer Lopez, her leadership, dedication, and creativity continue to propel OCTLA forward.

It is also critically important that we support our judiciary, including women judges in Orange County who are unfairly subjected to recall attacks. We must use our collective voice to make a difference there as well.

As we celebrate women in law this month, I encourage each of us to consider how we can amplify our collective voice. Whether through mentorship, charitable work, advocacy, or leadership within OCTLA, every effort matters. When women in law support one another, there is a ripple effect throughout the community. And this year, through connection, charity, and leadership, OCTLA's women are doing exactly that. 