



From the President

Clare Lucich

HICKS LAW FIRM



Mentorship at OCTLA

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF TRIAL LAWYERS



Mentorship is a cornerstone of the Orange County Trial Lawyers Association and one of the most meaningful ways our organization supports both new and experienced attorneys. While OCTLA is well known for its educational programs – including this year's trial-focused monthly education series – its strong sense of camaraderie, and valuable resources like the listserv and document bank, mentorship remains one of the most important ways OCTLA actively contributes to the legal community.

Many of us can point to the relationships we've built at OCTLA events – connections that have grown into lasting mentorships and friendships. For me, that includes guidance from seasoned trial lawyers like Geraldine Ly, whose insight and generosity have been invaluable. These types of relationships develop naturally through involvement and participation in OCTLA events and the broader legal community.

In addition to these organic connections, OCTLA has developed formal mentorship opportunities designed to cultivate the next generation of trial attorneys. One of the most impactful is our summer law internship program. Each year, OCTLA partners with local law schools to place approximately four to six law clerks with participating OCTLA member host firms across Orange County. These students are given a unique opportunity to experience plaintiff-side litigation firsthand.

OCTLA's law clerks are placed with host firms that expose them to a variety of practice areas, including personal injury,

medical malpractice, product liability, and employment law. OCTLA summer clerks have the opportunity to rotate between more than one firm, allowing them to experience different practice areas in a single summer – for example, working with both a product liability firm and a medical malpractice firm, or gaining exposure to both employment law and personal injury. Importantly, these clerks are not limited to ob-

servational roles – they are given real, substantive work. They assist with research, drafting, and case development, while also observing depositions, hearings, and even trials. This immersive experience provides a practical understanding of what it means to be a trial lawyer and helps bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world practice.

This year, we are proud to partner with a number of outstanding host firms that have committed their time and resources to mentoring these students. A special thank you to our host firms, which include Bisnar|Chase, Bentley & More, The Bertch Firm, and TBW Law.

Mentorship at OCTLA extends beyond students and into the early years of practice. Our "Bridging the Gap" program is a fun summer mixer held in Corona del Mar that connects newer attorneys with more seasoned practitioners.



This event brings together experienced trial lawyers and newer OCTLA members for candid discussions about the realities of practice, from case strategy to career development. More importantly, it fosters lasting relationships by pairing mentors and mentees who commit to continuing those connections beyond the event. In addition, OCTLA's active listserv serves as a daily mentorship tool. Whether seeking advice on a challenging legal issue, requesting sample documents, or



sharing strategy, members benefit from the collective knowledge and experience of the organization.

Mentorship matters. The mentors we learn from help shape how we practice law. They influence where we work, the opportunities we pursue, and the standards we set for ourselves. Simply put, mentorship helps define who we become as trial lawyers.

For that reason, investing time in mentorship – both as a mentor and a mentee – is critical. OCTLA's commitment to fostering these relationships ensures that our members are not only supported but also equipped to carry forward the important work we do. By mentoring the next generation, we strengthen our community, uphold the values of the plaintiff's bar, and ensure that the future of trial advocacy remains in capable hands. If you are interested in getting involved as a summer firm or with our Bridge the Gap event, please reach out to me! 