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RIVERSIDE LAWYER

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Death and Incapacity... What to Do When an Attorney Dies or Becomes Incapacitated



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RIVERSIDE LAWYER

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PRESIDENT'S Message

by Mark A. Easter



Making Connections: RCBA's Referral Service

One of the most overlooked and perhaps underutilized resources provided by the RCBA, to both the public and to local attorneys, is the Lawyer Referral Service ("LRS"). RCBA formed LRS in 1968 to provide a public service to Riverside County citizens, so that anyone in need of an attorney could, at a minimum, speak with someone and get matched up with the best lawyer available for a consultation.

The intake process at LRS is straightforward. Applicants who contact LRS (by e-mail or phone) initially speak with an intake counselor, who will write down information on the case, so that he/she can determine which LRS attorney is the most appropriate to assist the individual. The applicant and the attorney are then connected to set up an initial meeting. There is no consultation fee for matters related to worker's compensation, personal injury, or social security. For all other types of matters, there is a \$40 initial consultation fee, which goes to LRS to cover the administrative costs. If the attorney takes on the applicant's case, the attorney and applicant enter their own fee arrangement.

Frequently Asked Questions:

If I take the applicant's call, am I required to take the case?

No, the attorney is only committing to the initial consultation, which may involve giving advice or direction to the applicant. After that initial consultation, the attorney may decide that he/she cannot take on the matter or does not want to take on the matter for any reason or no reason.

If I take the case, will there be an expectation that I handle the case pro bono?

No, the LRS intake counselors tell applicants up front that this is a referral service only and that if they are matched with an attorney, they will need to enter into a fee arrangement with the attorney. Having said that, the attorney is of course free to charge a discount rate or decide to handle the matter pro bono.

If I take on a case, what percentage of any fees paid on the case go back to LRS?

Fifteen percent, which goes back into the administration of the LRS program and provides a source of income for the RCBA.

Is there an evaluation process in place to ensure that people who call into LRS are not taken advantage of by attorneys?

Yes, all applicants have the opportunity, either after the initial consultation or after their case is over, to fill out a questionnaire or survey and either compliment or express concerns about the services provided. These responses are reviewed by the LRS Board members, who may, if warranted, remove attorneys as LRS panelists for reasons such as poor performance or non-responsiveness by the attorney.

What areas of law are most requested by the applicants?

Family law, landlord/tenant, consumer contract, real estate, civil harassment restraining orders, property damage, and mechanic's liens.

What areas of law are in need of attorneys to refer clients?

Administrative, adoptions, family law, guardianships, conservatorships, immigration, consumer contract, and landlord/tenant.

Testimonials of Attorney Utilization of LRS:

Aaron Garcia has offices in Rancho Mirage and Riverside. Aaron took criminal cases from LRS for 3 or 4 years after leaving the District Attorney's office. For over ten years since then, Aaron has been on the LRS panel, and has taken on numerous business and real estate matters referred to him by LRS. Aaron explained that in addition, his role on many occasions is limited to advising an applicant the following: (1) How much filing a lawsuit will cost them; (2) That they do not have much of a case; (3) That they do not have sufficient recoverable damages; or (4) That filing a small claims action would make more sense. Although these referrals take time, Aaron appreciates having the opportunity to perform public service in this fashion.

Robert Chandler, who has practiced in Riverside for over 30 years, is a strong proponent of LRS and is surprised that many new attorneys and/or solo practitioners do not utilize LRS. Robert says that when he

first started his practice, LRS was a primary source of his office's new business. Some of his cases have been representing tenants. But most of the matters that have come to him have been business and real estate, including quiet title, partition, and easement cases. Robert said that in some of these cases, he charged well under his full private rate, but it was a rate that the client could afford and was still profitable for the attorney.

Thomas Sardoni has been practicing in Riverside for 34 years and has utilized the LRS service for 25-30 years. He said that being an LRS panelist is a great and efficient way to meet people and get your name out. He appreciates having the opportunity to calm people down when they think that they have no options. Thomas said that while the initial referrals do not always lead to engagements, those individuals will often refer other people to his office maybe months or a year later. Thomas estimates that about 25-30% of the people who call him become clients, in areas of business, real estate or employment. Finally, Thomas specifically wanted to give a shout out to the RCBA staff that administer LRS—that they do a tremendous job screening call-ins and making sure that they fully understand how the LRS program works.

So, if you are just starting out as an attorney or otherwise looking to expand your practice, you may want to consider signing up to be on the LRS panel. If you would like more information on this process, please contact Charlene Nelson at (951) 682-1015. Our next General Membership meeting will be on May 16. We will have graduation for the New Attorney Academy and a presentation on attorney wellness by Sharon Vidano.

Mark A. Easter is the president of the RCBA, a partner at Best Best & Krieger LLC, and has been residing and practicing law in Riverside since 1989.



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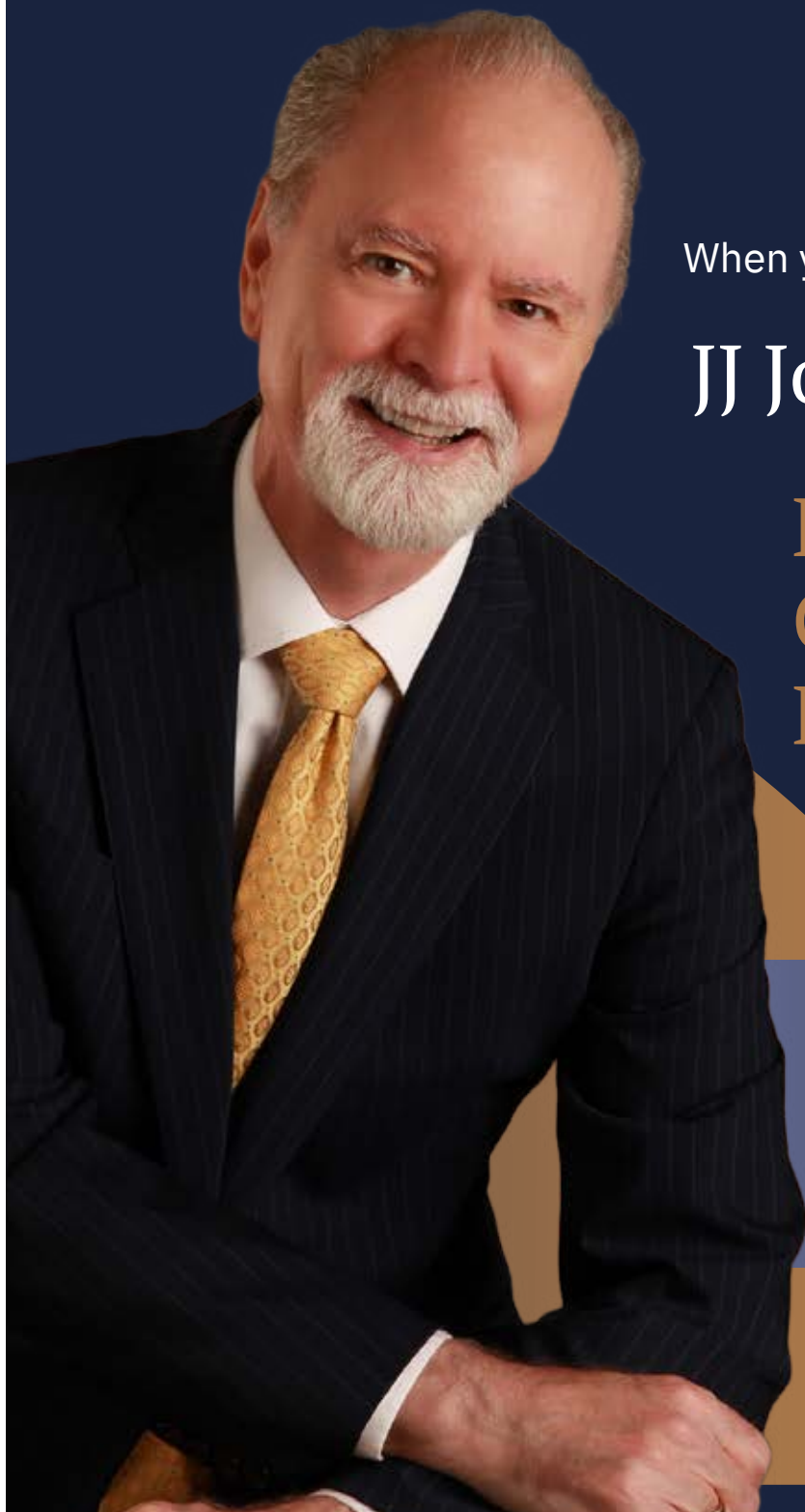
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BARRISTERS

President's Message

by Summer M. DeVore



Barristers has significantly increased its volunteer efforts this term. In March, Barristers participated in the University of La Verne, College of Law and Public Service's panel on "How to Successfully Network in Your Legal Career: What I Wish I Knew in Law School." The event was co-sponsored by Barristers, the Hispanic Bar Association of the Inland Empire, the Richard T. Fields Bar Association, and the Asian Pacific American Lawyers of the Inland Empire. Together, members from these four bar associations shared valuable insight and advice on networking with current law students. This is just one example of the many ways Barristers has contributed to the local legal community this term.

Barristers has also continued to seek ways to foster a sense of community and promote a healthy work-life balance. Accordingly, Barristers and the Hispanic Bar Association of the Inland Empire teamed up again to hike Mount Rubidoux in April. The hike presented the perfect opportunity to unwind, recharge, and enjoy the outdoors. Barristers is also planning another outdoor event in Temecula Valley Wine Country on June 7. For more details, check out our upcoming events below.

6th Annual Judicial Reception Presented by Barristers—May 7, 2025

Barristers is gearing up for its 6th Annual Judicial Reception, which will take place on May 7, 2025 from 5:00–7:30 p.m. at Riverside City Hall Grier Pavilion located at 3900 Main Street, 7th Floor (Rooftop), Riverside. Please join us in honoring our **Judicial Officer of the Year, Justice Richard T. Fields, and Attorney of the Year, Darryl Exum**. For more information and to register, please visit: <https://Barristers-Judicial-Reception-2025.eventbrite.com>.

2025-2026 Barristers Board Elections—June 25, 2025

The success of Barristers depends on three key factors: 1) the active participation of its members; 2) the generous support of the

legal community and sponsors; and 3) the strong leadership and active involvement of its Board. If you are interested in serving on the 2025-2026 Barristers Board, or if you know someone who would be a great addition to the Board, please contact us at barristers@riversidecountybar.com. **Nominations are due on or before May 14, 2025.** Elections will be held on June 25, 2025, beginning at 5:30 p.m., in the Presidential Lounge located at the Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, 3649 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside.

Please note that in order to be nominated for next term's Board, you must: 1) be a Barristers member (i.e., an RCBA member in good standing who has been in practice fewer than seven years and/or is younger than thirty-seven years of age); and 2) have attended at least three Barristers events in the 2024–2025 term. If you have not attended 3 Barristers events this term, don't worry, there's still time! Barristers has several events planned between now and elections—see some of our upcoming events below. Notably, attending elections on June 25, counts towards the three-event requirement. If you have any questions about nominations or elections, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Other Upcoming Events

- New Attorney Academy Graduation Celebration & Barristers "Happy Hour" Mixer: Friday, May 16, 2025, beginning at 2:30 p.m. at Lake Alice located at 3616 University Avenue, Riverside.
- Wine Tasting Outing in Temecula: Saturday, June 7, 2025, from approximately 10 a.m.–5 p.m. This event is back by popular demand through Grapeline Wine Tours and will include pick-up and drop-off in downtown Riverside and Old Town Temecula via chartered bus. Advanced registration is required. For more information on how to register, please contact Barristers at barristers@riversidecountybar.com.
- Elections and "Happy Hour" Mixer: Wednesday, June 25, 2025, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Presidential Lounge located at Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, 3649 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside.
- Barristers "Happy Hour" Mixer: Thursday, July 17, 2025—Save the date! More details are coming soon.

If you have an idea for Barristers or are interested in joining a Barristers committee (CLE, social, or community outreach) for the 2024-2025 term, I encourage you to contact me or any of the other Board members. I can be reached at (951) 783-9470 or summer.devore@streamkim.com.

Stay up to date by following us!

For additional information about our upcoming events and updates, please visit Barristers:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RCBABarristers/>

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Barristers Board Spotlight: Ellen Peng, 2024-2025 Member-at-Large

Ellen is an attorney at Borton Petrini, LLP in Redlands, California where she specializes in insurance defense. This is her first year on the Barristers Board. Ellen is also a member of APALIE (the Asian Pacific American

Lawyers of the Inland Empire) and SCCLA (Southern California Chinese Lawyer Association). Ellen hopes to stay involved in the community, especially in the Inland Empire, because she has had such amazing support system from attorneys and many others in this community. By staying involved, Ellen hopes to encourage more people to become involved and support one another in this challenging field.

Summer M. DeVore is an attorney with Stream Kim Hicks Wrage & Alfaro, PC in downtown Riverside where she specializes in business litigation. She is also a member of the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court. Summer can be reached at summer.devore@streamkim.com.

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As Lawyers: Be Prepared

by Boyd Jensen

Over the most recent horrible and dramatic fire-filled months suffered by many of our Southern California neighbors and friends, I worried about my former law clerk, and his family. Jason Hansen, who currently serves as a Battalion Chief within the Ventura County Fire Department. He and his peers alongside our Riverside County fire fighters protected us from the exigencies of mother nature during a very hostile and challenging time.



On January 8, 2025, California Governor Gavin Newsom revealed there were more than 7500 firefighters and emergency personnel deployed to protect Southern California communities from the wildfires. Governor Newsom stated California had received 45 engines from Oregon; 5 engines from Washington; 10 engines each from New Mexico and Utah; and 25 engines from Idaho.



Besides the California Fire Code and California Building Code, which are the primary codes governing fire prevention and safety, California has other effective laws to help its citizens from the dangers imposed by fires. As counsel to the businesses and individuals who require aid, we can advocate both to public agencies and on behalf of private citizens.

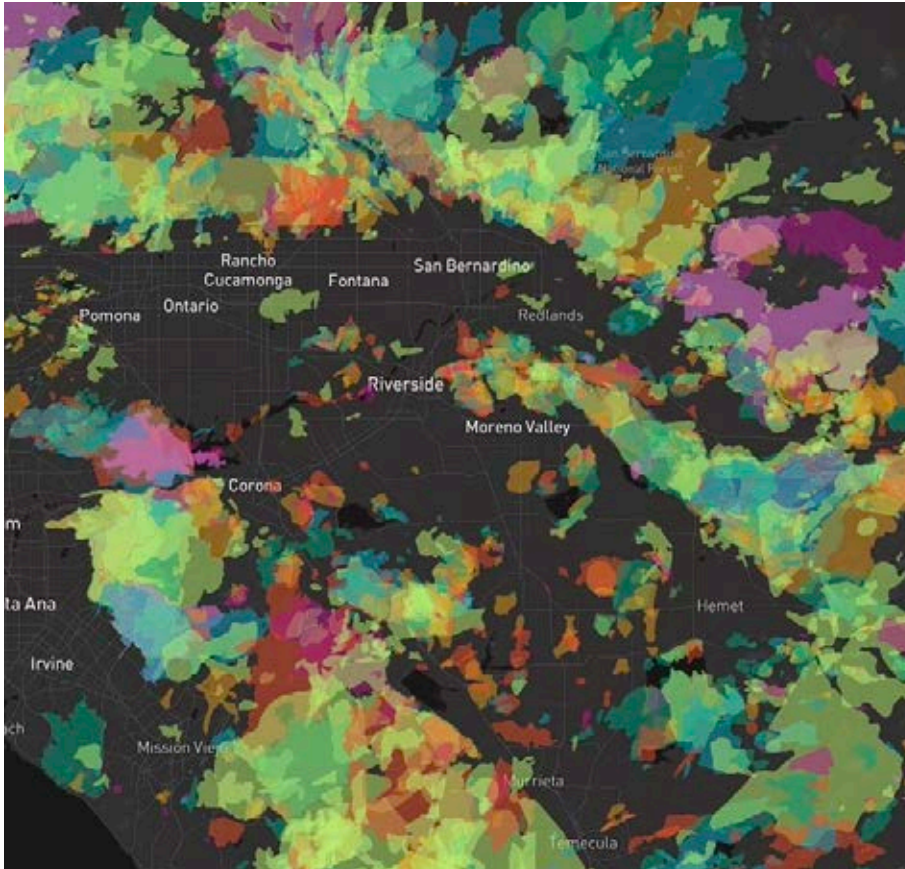
In California Government Code section 51175, the Legislature declared: "(a) Wildfires are extremely costly, not only to property owners and residents, but also to local agencies. Wildfires pose a serious threat to the preservation of the public peace, health, or safety...it is necessary that cities, counties, special districts, state agencies, and federal agencies work together to bring raging fires under control... Preventive measures are therefore needed to ensure the preservation of the public peace, health, or safety."

...And those preventative measures were gratefully on display as Governor Newsom described, and there are other legislated alternatives, besides important personal preventive measures. Insurance Code sections 10094 and 10095, established the California FAIR Plan Association, "to formulate and administer a program for the equitable apportionment among insurers of basic property insurance that may be afforded to persons having an interest in real or tangible personal property, who, after diligent effort ... are unable to procure insurance through normal channels...."

Further copious and important information is available at the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection CalFire website osfm.fire.ca.gov. Therein is described the importance of recognizing one's "Fire Hazard Severity Zone." For example, Government Code section 5182 mandates that "those who own, lease, control, operate or maintain dwelling units within a very high fire hazard severity zone must comply by maintaining a defensible space of 100 feet from each side of the structure;" modify "fuel consumption, based upon the consideration of flammability;" remove flammable trees or shrubs within 10 feet of a chimney or stove pipe outlet; maintain rooftops, free from leaves and needles; and furthermore, that violations of these laws authorized by Government Code section 51185 may be criminally prosecuted.

Riverside County Fire's website RVCFire.org is filled with similar information, including the importance under California Public Resources Code sections 4201-4204, for establishing zones including your "Evacuation Zone." For example, the Riverside Historic Courthouse is within the RIV – 0199 Zone. That is the courthouse zone ID and anyone in Riverside can go to the website rivcoready.org and enter their own address and obtain their zone ID, as well as download a Mobile App, which will provide information about which zones may be subject to an Evacuation Order, or other risks, such as active fires.

The 2025 Los Angeles fires, driven by Santa Ana winds and a record-dry fall, resulted in widespread devastation. The Palisades Fire and the Eaton Fire were particularly destructive, destroying thousands of structures and claiming lives. The fires forced mass evacuations and led to significant economic losses. Those evacuations, losses, and economic effect is felt by everyone, including those whose structures were unaffected by the actual fire. Riverside County urban areas have largely avoided the catastrophic consequences of the fires in more rural locations as this rivcoready.org map reveals.



These detail-laden websites and many others, discuss important principles of emergency preparation. Churches, schools, clubs and neighborhood organizations provide and teach important methods to be prepared, for the actual effect of a devastating fire or how to respond to the economic effect they experience.

Representing public venues during crises, such as California fairs and amusement parks, and gathering counsel from my former law clerk, Riverside County Fire Department friends, and some non-governmental organizations, which continually and successfully respond to such crises; allow me to suggest 4 critical emergency preparedness elements:

- **Plan.** Whether an individual, a family or an organization, a plan must be established for the time of emergency, AND the time of evacuation, personalized to them, including plans B & C.
- **Emergency Kit.** A bag, box, or a pre-prepared kit, which within moments can be obtained and taken where one goes, including water, food, medication, basic first aid, flashlight, and methods to communicate.
- **Access to Information.** Remaining informed of local alerts, weather reports, patent resources for plans A, B and C.

- **Personal Exigencies.** Besides clothing, these include older adults, those with disabilities, children, and pets, and if necessary practice or drill an emergency event to meet those exigencies.

And yes, I know of no other profession that can more adequately counsel, advise, and assist our neighbors, local businesses, and government entities, than our legal profession. We deal with every aspect of life, from before birth until the handling of assets and the consequences of life long afterwards. We all pray we can avoid such emergencies, but often times it is out of our hands. However, what we can do daily is to be prepared and help others.

Boyd Jensen, of Garrett & Jensen, is a member of the RCBA Publications Committee, an Advocate Member of the American Board of Trial Attorneys, and has been rated AV Preeminent for over 35 years.



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Building a Resilient Malibu School District: Emergency Preparedness in Fire-Prone Communities

by Stephanie Veniez

Malibu is well-known for its scenic coastline, rural atmosphere, and tight-knit community of outdoor enthusiasts. Unfortunately, Malibu is also known for its devastating wildfires. In January, the Palisades Fire destroyed hundreds of homes in east Malibu and burned thousands of acres of protected conservation land. As Malibu's residents look to rebuild, its community calls for heightened emergency preparedness for some of our most vulnerable citizens: students.

This year alone, Malibu students have missed 20 instructional days in addition to school holidays. School sites were shut down intermittently due to safety concerns, electrical outages, and road closures. Webster Elementary School became an ad-hoc staging area for emergency vehicles. School closures and evacuation orders were significant disruptions for students and teachers who were scrambling to plan for remote learning in the face of last-minute closure announcements. But this story isn't a new one for Malibu. Families were heavily impacted during the Woolsey fire in 2018, which destroyed more than a thousand structures and nearly 100,000 acres in northwest Malibu. This fire season (which has included the Palisades Fire, as well as the Broad Fire in November 2024 and the Franklin Fire in January 2024) has strengthened Malibu citizens' desire to be forward-thinking in school emergency planning. However, it may surprise you to know that the fate of Malibu's students does not rest in the hands of its own residents.

For the last 70 years, Malibu public schools have been a part of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SM-MUSD), whose administrative headquarters are located in Santa Monica. Although Malibu shares a district with Santa Monica, several families have questioned whether these communities can safely remain tethered due to the increasing frequency of emergency events. SM-MUSD operates four schools in Malibu, representing less than 15% of its total pupil enrollment. Despite the District's attempts to be attentive to its school sites, Malibu faces unique and isolated challenges. A Santa Monica-based district is not attuned to the nuanced safety needs of a community more than 20 miles away.

In an area where wildfires and severe weather events frequently lead to power outages, reliable infrastructure is not a luxury—it's a necessity. Yet Malibu schools struggle with essential preparedness measures, leaving students and staff vulnerable when disaster strikes. During the Franklin Fire, which did not affect Santa Monica, SM-MUSD did not close Malibu schools even though Malibu lost power, resulting in dozens of children being left inside dark buildings. The lone board member representing Malibu recognized the danger and called the superintendent, begging him to close

the schools. Her request was disregarded. Parents have publicly voiced their distress at this incident, including one parent who saw the flames from her home as she sheltered-in-place, but could not reach or contact her child's school to know whether they were safe. This anecdote echoes the Woolsey fire, when Malibu parents frantically called for schools to close, but the District did not act.

Frustrated parents have presented various proposals, but the District has not responded in kind. SM-MUSD has given little direction to Malibu students who were adversely affected by school closures and evacuation orders because the same learning and planning discrepancies do not impact Santa Monica students. Executive Order N-6-25, signed by Governor Newsom in January, waives the required 180 school days for districts that closed due to the fires in Los Angeles County. The state will also not impose any penalties for an affected school district's failure to hold the minimum number of school days. This helps the district, but it does not help students who may have fallen behind.

Outspoken Malibu residents have called for the installation of generators, remote curriculum plans, solar power solutions, and an internet backup plan to ensure ongoing and uninterrupted education. Transportation has also been a contentious issue for Malibu, since SM-MUSD keeps its buses in Santa Monica and those vehicles are unable to access routes in Malibu when roads are closed (even if school is open). This disparity says much about the strained logic of keeping two extremely different communities linked together, particularly when their needs diverge.

SM-MUSD is the perfect example of "one size fits all" emergency planning. Malibu likely requires targeted investments and tailored support systems to meet its specific needs. While all districts have emergency preparedness plans, Malibu's unique needs require them to have additional considerations for wildfire danger. This type of emergency preparedness is rarely needed for most communities, but it is part of Malibu's way of life. As we begin to understand the Palisades Fire impact, it appears that targeted wildfire preparedness may not be something SM-MUSD is prepared to face.

These concerns reflect a larger conversation about self-determination and local control. Malibu's public-school families struggle to decide how they fit into a school district whose emergency preparedness seems not to take them into account.

Stephanie Veniez is an Associate at Best Best & Krieger LLP who represents public schools and special districts throughout the state. She specializes in labor and employment, student services, and special education representation.





IN SEARCH OF THE GOLDEN CHALICE: THE UNTOLD STORY

by D.W. Duke

Between the years 3000 BCE and 1500 CE many Ethiopians and Yemenites settled in West Africa. The relationship of these distant regions was remote but powerful. For this reason, Ethiopian traditions, customs, and culture, are still prevalent in West Africa today, even sharing a belief that they are descended from the massive empire of Israel and Africa that later became known as the Solomonic Empire. This empire was based on the marriage of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba and included a territory of nearly one million square miles and influenced much of the continent of Africa.

This book explores the lives of three descendants of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, whose family ruled a vast empire in West Africa in the year 1617. Leading an army of 2,700 male and female warriors, they attacked a European military consisting of 20,000 British and Portuguese troops to drive the Atlantic Slave Trade from West Africa, in a war that became known as the Great Battle to Free the Slaves. (Category, historical fiction.)

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Damage Control: Who Is Responsible When Leased Commercial Property is Damaged by Natural Disaster?

by Jessica Lomakin
(with contributions from Michael Russo & Aysha Majeed)

Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, fires, and floods, can have a devastating impact on communities. They also raise significant and costly questions regarding contractual obligations and insurance coverage when destruction occurs in tenant-occupied commercial properties. In a commercial context, the parties' lease agreement will govern the answers to these tough questions. Ideally, landlords and tenants have carefully negotiated allocation of risk through insurance provisions and termination rights to avoid surprises when disaster strikes.

Most casualty provisions require some landlord action or decision at 60, 90, 120 (even 180) days following a loss, allowing for clarity on: 1) extent of any damage; 2) repair of cost and timing; and 3) availability of insurance proceeds. The devastating Los Angeles wildfires began in early January 2025, just over 90 days ago. This means commercial landlords and tenants are likely now making critical decisions over whether to continue the lease in effect, or exercise termination rights provided by the parties' agreement (if any).

Landlords may have incentive to terminate if insurance proceeds have fallen short or reconstruction is not feasible. Conversely, tenants have incentive to terminate if the premises are rendered unusable and they are unable to generate revenue in the space (or in an alternate space) while they rebuild. For better or for worse, these calculations (on both sides) will be driven by the contractual terms the parties negotiated before the casualty occurred, underscoring the importance of understanding what your insurance and casualty language provides (and requires).

Casualty Provisions and Potential for Lease Termination

Absent express provisions to the contrary, a lease is terminated when the subject of the lease is destroyed. However, practically speaking, California commercial leases rarely allow automatic termination upon premises destruction. Instead, it is more common to see a negotiated casualty and restoration provision specifying how insurance proceeds are to be applied, under what circumstances the landlord is required to rebuild and a timeframe for reconstruction. A lease may offer a termination option to landlord or tenant (or both) if, for example: 1) it is not feasible to rebuild due to lack of insurance proceeds or other factors; 2) reconstruction will take longer than a specified time (i.e. 270 days or more); or 3) the damage occurs late in the lease term.

Damage and destruction provisions are often complex with many "if/then" scenarios that are very fact specific. For example, termination due to casualty almost always arises from complete or total destruction of the premises. As a result, defining what constitutes total destruction versus partial destruction can be critical. Similarly, rights can be dependent upon whether damage is "material" to the use – careful drafting of these fact specific concepts can help to limit disputes.

Complications in Allocation of Insurance

Availability of insurance proceeds can trigger certain rights and obligations, as can the distinction between an "insured loss" and an "uninsured loss." Tenants are likely required to carry some form of insurance on personal property, tenant improvements, and sometimes, on the premises itself (either directly or passed through as operating expenses in a triple net lease). The lease may also obligate the landlord to separately carry its own insurance on the physical structure. In the absence of specific insurance allocations, rights will be tied to either party's own insured interest.

Another layer of complexity exists where fee and leasehold mortgages are concerned. Lenders often impose additional requirements borrowers must negotiate into the lease. It is not uncommon for lenders to require: 1) insurance proceeds be first applied to the borrower's debt; or 2) insurance proceeds be paid directly to the lender, who will then oversee reconstruction and release funds as work is completed. Either scenario can result in a lack of sufficient insurance proceeds to complete reconstruction and significantly delay the process.

It may be surprising to learn that absent express rent abatement language, tenants must continue to pay rent. This requirement usually is coupled with a requirement that tenant carry business interruption insurance which then would cover that expense. Landlords and tenants should remember the relationship between insurance and casualty provisions because business interruption insurance may not provide coverage where the lease provides for rent abatement during a casualty event – effectively resulting in wasted premiums. The landlord equivalent is rental interruption insurance (that may be passed through as an operating expense to tenant) and is used when tenant's rent is abated.

Further Considerations

Insurance and casualty provisions go hand in hand and must be read holistically to understand how (and if) the premises will be restored. Relative obligations under these sections are often overlooked as "boilerplate" but savvy leasing parties understand how to use their own leverage and risk tolerance to negotiate favorable terms. Clearly defining how risk is allocated can be just as beneficial as negotiating more favorable terms.

Commercial landlords and tenants must proactively prepare for and respond to natural disasters resulting in damage or total destruction to the leased premises. Understanding that lease language is the driver of damage-related outcomes will help both parties to better insulate themselves and mitigate the risks associated with the challenges of an increasingly unpredictable world.

Jessica Lomakin is a partner with Best, Best & Krieger LLP. Her practice focuses on real estate transactions including commercial leasing, owners' associations, and mobile homes. She is a member of Commercial Real Estate Women ("CREW") and serves as a Girl Scout troop leader.

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California Workplace Violence Prevention Plans: A New Era of Employee Safety

by Michelle M. Wolfe

In an effort to enhance workplace safety and reduce the risks of violence on the job, California has introduced new workplace violence prevention requirements that businesses must adhere to. The passage of Senate Bill 553 (SB 553) marks a significant step toward ensuring employee protection across various industries. Most employers in California were required to develop and implement Workplace Violence Prevention Plans (WVPPs) as part of their Injury and Illness Prevention Programs (IIPPs) by July 1, 2024. Attorneys and law firms should know these requirements as employers and be prepared to advise business clients with employees, too.

Understanding the New Requirements

SB 553 amended Section 6401.7 of the California Labor Code and added Section 6401.9. They mandate that employers take proactive measures to prevent workplace violence, defining it as any act or threat of physical force, intimidation, or disruptive behavior in a work setting. The law applies to most private and public sector employers, with some exceptions for certain healthcare facilities already covered under existing regulations.

Key components of the Workplace Violence Prevention Plan include:

1. **A Written Workplace Violence Prevention Plan** – Employers must establish a documented plan that outlines strategies for identifying, assessing, and responding to workplace violence hazards.
2. **Employee Training** – Businesses must train employees to recognize potential threats, respond to violent incidents, and understand their rights under the law.
3. **Incident Reporting and Response** – A clear process must be in place for employees to report violent incidents or threats without fear of retaliation.
4. **Recordkeeping Requirements** – Employers must maintain records of workplace violence incidents, training sessions, and corrective actions taken.
5. **Periodic Plan Review and Updates** – Companies must regularly review and update their WVPPs to adapt to evolving workplace safety challenges.

Who Is Affected?

The law applies to most California employers, including those in retail, hospitality, manufacturing, and office environments. However, employers in industries such as healthcare, where specific workplace violence regulations already exist, may be subject to different compliance requirements.

Steps Employers Should Take Now

The deadline was July 1, 2024, but many businesses have not complied with these legal requirements. Companies should take the following steps to ensure compliance:

- Conduct a workplace violence risk assessment to identify potential hazards.
- Develop a written WVPP tailored to their specific work environment.
- Train employees and supervisors on workplace violence prevention strategies.
- Establish clear procedures for reporting and responding to incidents.
- Maintain detailed records of compliance efforts.

The Importance of Workplace Violence Prevention

Workplace violence poses a significant threat to employee well-being and organizational stability. By implementing robust prevention plans, California businesses can foster safer work environments, reduce liability risks, and demonstrate a commitment to employee safety. Compliance with these regulations is crucial for companies to protect their workforce and avoid potential penalties.

Workplace violence prevention plans are not only legally required; they are good because they help create a safer, more supportive, and productive work environment. They are intended to save lives and prevent harm. A well-thought-out plan helps identify risks early and establishes protocols to prevent violent incidents. Employees feel safer knowing there are systems in place to protect them. These plans encourage a culture of respect, including training and fostering a workplace culture where people look out for one another. In addition, a preventative approach shows that the company values its people and builds trust and loyalty. This improves morale and productivity because when people feel safe, they are more focused and engaged.

Employers who fail to comply may face penalties, including fines and citations from the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA).

Prevention is always less costly than dealing with the aftermath. Employers should consult legal and safety experts to ensure their Workplace Violence Prevention Plans align with California's new requirements. Companies can create a safer and more productive workplace by taking proactive measures today.

Michelle M. Wolfe is a Partner at the Sloat Law Group, APC in Palm Desert. Her practice focuses on representing employers and management on labor and employment matters in litigation and in providing workplace solutions.



Disaster at the State Bar

by James O. Heiting

What is happening with the State Bar? Scrambling, finding excuses, blaming others, trying to survive one more fiasco. But how will the State Bar justify putting on a bar exam (of their own invention) this past February that resulted in such a conglomeration of failures that the Legislature, through Senate Judiciary Chair Tom Umberg, is insisting on a “deep dive” investigation and the all appointed Board of Trustees must do their own investigation?

Scores are having to be readjusted; certain portions of the test are going to be thrown out; “psychometricians” have been called in to advise the State Bar and the California Supreme Court on what to do; law school deans are up in arms; a federal class action lawsuit has reportedly been filed; the State Bar fired the company it hired to run the technology portion of putting on this “experimental” first time ever, remote bar exam (but refuses to fire the company that absolutely fell on its face in putting together the multiple choice portion of the test); and the California Supreme Court has ordered that the next bar exam must be conducted “in person” and to scuttle the “all remote” exam the State Bar commissioned.

Technology issues included, but are not limited to, the following: delays in connecting and being able to begin the test; dropped connections; unsaved test section responses; inability to cut and paste; chronic freezing and lags; some could not access the tests at all; proctors did not know answers to simple questions of function; individual proctors used differing standards in making “rulings,” at least one time actually refusing to allow a test taker to proceed because the proctor did not approve the same environment (room) approved the day before by a different proctor; and the applicants could not use any paper in making notes or in outlining their analyses.

The technology company contracted for this portion of the exam has been fired, but this is not the end of the woes created by the testing.

The State Bar Steering Committee on Professional Responsibility and Conduct - Practical Guidance for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Practice of Law - Executive Summary:

“Generative AI is a tool that has wide-ranging application for the practice of law and administrative functions of the legal practice for all licensees, regardless of firm size, and all practice areas. Like any technology, generative AI must be used in a manner that conforms to a lawyer’s professional responsibility obligations, including those set forth in the Rules of Professional Conduct and the State Bar Act. A lawyer should understand the risks and

benefits of the technology used in connection with providing legal services.”

The Bar, citing duties of competence and diligence (Rules 1.1 and 1.3) says:

“It is possible that generative AI outputs could include information that is false, inaccurate, or biased.

“A lawyer must ensure competent use of the technology, including the associated benefits and risks, and apply diligence and prudence with respect to facts and law.

“Overreliance on AI tools is inconsistent with the active practice of law and application of trained judgment by the lawyer.

“AI-generated outputs can be used as a starting point but must be carefully scrutinized. They should be critically analyzed for accuracy and bias, supplemented, and improved, if necessary...

“The duty of competence requires more than the mere detection and elimination of false AI-generated results.

“A lawyer’s professional judgment cannot be delegated to generative AI and remains the lawyer’s responsibility at all times.”

The Bar goes on to cite Rules 3.1 and 3.3:

“A lawyer must review all generative AI outputs, including, but not limited to, analysis and citations to authority for accuracy before submission..., and correct any errors or misleading statements...”

You may say, of course, “But what does that have to do with the bar exam?” Observers concluded that multiple choice questions were not properly vetted, they expanded the law that was proper to test, they were provided by a company that did not go through the necessary checks and balances to ensure accuracy and fairness, they contained incorrect law, they used improper question formation and contained typos and multiple other errors. This was the very first time any of these questions were used in such an exam; and many educational leaders in the law tell us that historical checks, rechecks, research, and validation requirements were not met. Recently disclosed, well after this horror story bar exam was exposed, is the fact that the company that prepared the multiple-choice questions, supposedly reviewed and overseen by the State Bar, used non-lawyers who used Generative AI to form a substantial number of the questions used!

Even with these issues, the State Bar has refused to change companies and will use the same company to generate questions for the next exam. Mary Basick (Assistant

Dean of Academic Studies at U.C. Irvine School of Law) and Katie Moran (Associate Professor at University of San Francisco School of Law) stated the following:

"[B]uried in the hours of meeting following the exam is another story: our State Bar's complete lack of curiosity about whether the brand new multiple-choice questions they are using - questions authored quickly by a bar preparation company with no experience in writing actual bar exam questions - might be flawed. Because the State Bar's leadership seems unwilling to even consider whether there might be a problem..."

They go on to say the questions expanded the law that was to be tested, added "dozens of new rules," and "produced questions that are deeply flawed because of poor drafting and errors in the law." Later disclosures confirmed that many questions were generated by the use of unchecked and unverified AI product!

Any lawyers familiar with recent decisions reflecting proper and improper use of AI know full well that GAI products may involve fabricated legal citations, incorrect law, "hallucinations," false or partially inaccurate information.

State Bar publication:

"The State Bar protects the public and strengthens the profession by: Licensing, regulation, and discipline of attorneys ...[developing and administering the bar exam]."

The State Bar "protects the public" by ensuring that attorneys have the requisite knowledge to be competent in their representation and counseling of clients. This requires rigorous standards. We have a Committee of Bar Examiners who reports to the Board of Trustees, overseen by the Supreme Court. That line of responsibility is charged with making sure that the bar exam is a tough, but fair, test that supports the ideal that those who are successful in passing will be competent in their counseling and representation of clients. They are also charged with the responsibility that those who failed the test, or those who were precluded from taking the test, or those who were caused to be unable to finish the test, were fairly treated and did not deserve to be admitted as lawyers in the state.

The Committee of Bar Examiners met recently (April 18th) and, in an attempt to ameliorate some of the problems caused by these horrendous failures, made some recommendations for scoring adjustments. They said, "after reviewing data and performance from the February exam, and in recognition of the reported experiences of examinees, performance data, and the challenges associated with fairly and accurately categorizing the level of disruption experienced by individual examinees, the CBE recommended: "that the raw passing score be dropped from 560 to 534 (based on "psychometrics"); and "that scores be psychometrically imputed..." and possibly throwing out the need to answer 57 of 171 scored multiple choice questions and two of the six written sections of the exam.

The State Bar said "we will continue refining our approach to ensure a more responsive, fair and equitable process now and in the future." That is all well and good, but can you imagine what would happen if the quality of your work product mirrored the quality of this bar examination? Would you still have a job? Would the State Bar investigate and initiate charges against you? All reasonable questions.

The circumstances surrounding this exam cannot be excused by the State Bar trying to save money, or the Supreme Court making suggestions as to how to conduct the exam. This was a new licensing test recommended and contracted by the State Bar and approved by the Supreme Court. It will result in a lack of trust in the accuracy and fairness of the test and/or results, no matter how the bar, using "psychometrics," adjusts the testing scores; and it will result in many examinees having to go through this bar exam again. As any lawyer knows, that is a terrible burden and requires extreme expenditures of time, devotion, and lack of ability to earn income. In addition, admission is delayed, and all income and potential income as a lawyer for that period is lost. This can derail careers, and dreams, and firm commitments to hire bar takers as lawyers. There will be great impacts on many levels.

What else is happening with the State Bar? Plenty. The bar is a very busy place, with many arms reaching in many directions to meet its obligations to protect the public and enhance diversity, equity and access. Some of their efforts have gone into dues increases to make up for claimed budget shortfalls (part of the solution was to contract for February's "cheaper by far" bar exam, proposed to save \$3.8 million).

You might be interested to know that a 2024 report by the State Bar indicates that the Bar distributed (was this from money paid to the State Bar equating to interest earned on money held in trust for clients and other people and entities other than the State Bar?) *\$150 million in legal service grants in 2023, plus \$20 million in funding for the governor's "Care Court."*

Other emphasis has been on *mandated reporting* for trust accounts, MCLE, reporting other attorneys for misconduct, and now mandatory reporting on pro bono work. Other actions include ethics standards are being set for ADR providers (mediators and arbitrators); LAP expansion; website having "improved" navigation and "simplified" compliance (if you say so); responsiveness and availability of live people to talk to in case of questions or issues with the "simplified" website and getting questions answered (not); qualified or provisional admissions; discipline backlog continuing to be a problem; continuing backlash from the Girardi cases; studies on diversity and equity at many levels related to legal careers and discipline; continuing disappointing legislative audits. Board of Trustees (BOT) accountability and responsibility should be addressed, and maybe we should go back to elections. And does anybody pay attention to those "public comments?" It seems that no matter how many comments are made, or how much sense they make, this BOT goes on

and acts as they intended before any comments were invited; and more...

The State Bar also does make great efforts to make justice available for the many peoples and nationalities that exist in California, with their many languages and economic conditions, and aiding the disadvantaged and distressed. Protecting the public is always on their minds.

I am grateful for those staff members of the State Bar who take very seriously their charge to keep our justice system on track, to dispense the best semblance of justice possible and to engender respect for our courts and for the legal profession.

Finally, in line with the topic of this month's *Riverside Lawyer*, we should recognize and applaud the State Bar for stepping up and making available its publication(s) on disaster relief to those who suffered such egregious damage in the Southern California fires this year.

James O. Heiting is a partner with Rizio Lipinsky Heiting. He was president of the State Bar of California in 2005-2006 and president of the RCBA in 1996.



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Death & Incapacity... What to Do When an Attorney Dies or Becomes Incapacitated

by Diana Renteria

Lawyers have a fiduciary duty to create a plan if they become incapacitated or die. Lawyers have a duty to protect their clients. Lawyers should be prepared for personal disaster whether it be death, disability, disappearance, and/or disbarment. Lawyers who do not have a succession plan in the event of death or incapacity leave their clients matters and firms in jeopardy.

How is Incapacity Determined in California?

In California, incapacity is initially determined by a physician who has treated the individual and/or a physician or a psychologist that has evaluated specifically for capacity. Under the California Probate Code section 810-13, incapacity is defined as an inability to make decisions or perform certain acts when at least one of the mental functions are impaired or lacking such as:

- Inability to understand or communicate with others;
- Problems recognizing familiar people and objects;
- Failure to reason logically;
- Presence of disillusions and/or hallucinations;
- Inability to control mood, resulting in actions that are inappropriate in relation to the circumstances; and/or
- Failure to understand and appreciate the consequences of their actions.

Who Can Help if a Lawyer Dies or Becomes Incapacitated?

Those individuals include:

- The executor of a lawyer's estate;
- The conservator of the lawyer;
- Another lawyer or firm whom prior arrangements have been made;
- The lawyer's surviving spouse, if licensed;
- Other attorneys appointed by the Superior Court (pursuant to Business and Professions code section 6180 and 6190); and/or
- The purchaser of the practice in the event that the practice is sold.

Closing a Law Practice

A law practice may have to be closed permanently, temporarily, completely or partially when the lawyer dies or is physically or mentally unable to practice law (voluntarily and/or involuntary). There are ethical considerations when closing a law practice such as the following:

- Communication to and from clients (send letters out to all clients and make hard copies or electronic copies of the files);
- Communication to opposing counsel;
- Staff must be retained or terminated;
- Occupancy of the office premises;
- Record and file disposition;
- Tax returns and tax issues;
- There's a need to protect the client's confidentiality, information, and case files; and
- There will also be a need to stop the intake of new client matters.

Selling a Law Practice

A lawyer who purchased the practice of a deceased or disabled lawyer may, pursuant to the provisions under the ABA rule 1.17, pay to the estate or other representative of that lawyer agreed upon purchase price for the practice.

- ABA Rule 1.17 is the rule to refer to whether a lawyer or a law firm may sell or purchase a law practice, so long as the seller gives written notice to each of the seller's clients.

What is a Succession Plan?

Succession planning is essential to every lawyer's practice to protect their clients in the event of an attorney's disability or death. Effective succession plans include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Choosing a successor or practice administrator that can take over the responsibility of the practice and/or concluding the practice;
- Written instructions of how and where client information is stored (for example bank information, account details, trust account information, who needs to be notified);
- Information concerning disposition of closed client files, and a copy of the master client list;
- Information regarding payment of current liabilities (monthly statements, electric, cloud storage, law firm Internet, IT monthly bill, etc.);
- Instructions to gain access to computer passwords; and
- Information detailing how the practice administrator will be compensated.

What is the Expectation for Lawyers who Share Office Space?

Lawyers who share office space are not partners and thus each attorney should have their own succession plan, so that clients do not falsely believe that the other attorney in the office will assume responsibility for the cases.

What Procedures Should You Take When an Attorney is Deceased or Becomes Incapacitated?

If an attorney dies or is disabled resulting in either the cessation of the law practice or the incapacity to attend to the law practice, Business and Professions Code sections 6180 (cessation) or 6190 (incapacity) can come into play if there are unfinished client matters for which no other active member of the State Bar has (with consent of the client) agreed to assume responsibility. Effective procedures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Ask the local court clerk to run a computer search to determine if the attorney has any open matters;
- Take possession and protect all computers;
- Review desk calendars for information on cases in process and due dates;
- Check attorney-client trust accounts and inform the bank to put a freeze on the account;
- For closed offices, notify the post office to prevent mail and important documents from being delivered; and
- If a client's will is found and the will cannot be returned to the client, the Superior Court in most counties will have a system for deposit of non-returnable client wills.

ABA Rule 28: Model Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement

- **Inventory of Lawyers Files:** When an attorney becomes incapacitated or dies and there's no partner, executor or other responsible party capable of conducting the attorney's affairs, the presiding judge in the judicial district in which the attorney maintained a practice, upon proof of the fact shall appoint a lawyer or lawyers to inventory the files of the attorney and to take such action as seems indicated to protect the interests of the respondent and his or her clients.
- **Protection for Records Subject to Inventory:** Any lawyer so appointed shall not be permitted to disclose information contained in any of the files inventoried without the consent of the client to whom the files relate.
- **The lawyer-client privilege** must be extended, so the review of the file by the trustee is not deemed to be disclosed to a third party which would waive the privilege.

California Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 1.1 - Sole Practitioner

- Under the California Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 1.1: A lawyer shall not intentionally, recklessly, with gross negligence, or repeatedly fail to perform legal services with competence. A sole practitioner must comply with the diligence requirements under California Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 1.3.
- If you are a sole practitioner, the executor or the administrator of your estate will be responsible for notifying your clients of your incapacity or death. The executor or administrator is responsible for returning the client's files. The local Superior Court may appoint a practice administrator. The deceased attorney's law practice may be sold to another member of the bar so long as it has permission to do so under the California Rules of Professional Conduct.

What Happens if the Deceased or Incapacitated Attorney is Involved in a Law Firm or Partnership?

- If an attorney becomes incapacitated or dies in your law firm or partnership, the law firm will maintain custody of the client's file. It's important for the assisting lawyer and the affected lawyer to discuss the details of what role the assisting lawyer is to play in the event of the death or incapacitated.
- When transitioning clients to other attorneys it's important to consider what information about the affected attorney can be revealed to the clients. How deep into the client file can the affected attorney go for purposes of protecting client confidentiality.

Who Can Gain Access to a Deceased or Incapacitated Lawyer's Trust Accounts?

- Appointing an assisting or transitional attorney is important for the transitional attorney to access funds held in the affected attorney's trust accounts.
- It is important for an assisting attorney to sign on your account in the event of death or incapacity.
- When there is no backup attorney authorized to approve IOLTA disbursements in the event of death or incapacity, a relative, spouse, or the deceased attorney's estate must go through the process of getting motions filed to direct the bank to release the IOLTA funds.
- It is important to arrange a successor or practice administrator have access to the IOLTA account in order to prevent the deceased or incapacitated lawyer's relatives or spouses from being liable for

a legal malpractice claim arising from a client who was unable to secure adequate representation because the funds were held in the attorney's IOLTA account.

- An option to protect client's IOLTA disbursements is to create a "payable on death" or "transfer on death" arrangement with the financial institution.

Why is it Important to Plan Ahead?

IT IS IMPORTANT TO PLAN AHEAD:

- Your Fiduciary Obligations include writing down passwords to your computer and phones.
- Planning ahead removes the burden from your family.
- As a transitional attorney you must consider the ethical obligations and responsibilities for: winding down the affected attorney's office; Business and Professional Ethics Code; Representing clients that may be a conflict of interest; Maintaining the attorney-client privilege and confidentiality.

Diana Renteria is the senior attorney at Renteria & Associates, a small boutique firm with big firm capabilities. Caring attention and fiercely protective of clients' interests in the areas of family law, criminal, juvenile dependency, and probate.



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Walter S. Clayson and His Historic Law Firm

RCBA President 1926

by Bruce Todd

One writer referred to him as a “crusty old soul . . . with a sense of humor under his hard shell.” His daughter described him as a “country lawyer who helped people in need.” Whatever the description, Walter S. Clayson has undoubtedly earned the distinction of being one of the earliest pioneers of the legal profession in Riverside County.

Born on January 25, 1887 in Redwood Falls, MI, Clayson moved with his parents to Corona in 1900, where his father opened a furniture store. Clayson's older brother Marshall was already residing in Corona.

He attended high school at Corona High and graduated in 1905. By his own admission, he was not the most studious student at the school.

“I graduated from the high school probably more on account of the fact that the institution was overcrowded and needed the room rather than because of my intellectual achievements,” Clayson once told newspaper columnist, Fred L. Eldridge, who was also the one who described him as a “crusty old soul” in an earlier article.

Whether he really had any academic limitations or not, Clayson continued on to law school where he graduated from USC in 1908. He then started practicing law under George Freeman who was Corona's first attorney and who became Corona's first City Attorney and Riverside County's first judge of the Superior Court. Their office was located in what was then the First National Bank at the northwest corner of 6th and Main.

In one of his articles about him, Eldridge noted that Clayson, besides his legal skills, had a vivid memory and could quote verbatim long passages from plays. He described him as being a proficient cornet player in his high school band.

In those days (1910), Corona, which had been incorporated in 1896, was described as a “quiet, sleepy city” in part because of the absence of street cars, which only traveled as far as Arlington. There were three hotels—Alden House, Del Rey, and The Commercial—which provided hospitality for people passing through the city. It was in this “sleepy” environ that the *Riverside Daily Press* noted on June 9, 1914, that Clayson had married Nell Ratliff.



Walter S. Clayson



Eventually, Clayson became Corona's second City Attorney for what has been described as “the magnificent salary of \$50 per month.” He also became a Justice of the Peace. Some of his exploits as a JOP were described in the local press.

In article from the *Riverside Daily Press* dated October 13, 1921, it was noted that there had been a preliminary hearing for Armando “Miracle Man” Dominguez of Chino who had been charged with practicing medicine without a license. He was released after posting bail set by Clayson in the sum of \$200.

Another article from the *Riverside Daily Press* dated February 18, 1922, described seven (!!!) arrests for speeding during the past week in the Santa Ana Canyon. Clayson levied fines against these speedsters in the total sum of \$125.

David R. Saunders, a lawyer at the Clayson law firm since 1983, recalls a story which has been passed down through the ages about Clayson's tenure as Justice of the Peace.

“He was called to officiate a wedding in Elsinore which was a long way from Corona back then. After the wedding, the bride's father asked Walter if it was customary to pay him for his fee for officiating over the wedding. He responded in the affirmative. The bride's father then handed him a cigar as his payment.”

Besides his work as the City Attorney and a Justice of the Peace, Clayson was also involved in other community activities. He served as president of the Corona Chamber of Commerce. He also was an organizer, charter member, and eventual president of the Corona Rotary.

During his lengthy career as an attorney, Clayson was involved in numerous interesting situations. One is described by the aforementioned Fred Eldridge who provided tidbits about Clayson in several of his columns.

In his March 2, 1972 column for the *Corona Daily Independent*, Eldridge wrote that “Clayson always escaped scandal. He had one near miss, however. As the attorney for the Temescal Water Co., he would buy up pieces of land for the company and transfer them into the company's name. He bought a piece of land up in Temescal Canyon during the bootleg days and forgot to transfer the title to

the water company. One day he remembered it and had it recorded."

"Two days later," continues Eldridge, "the newspapers reported that the sheriff had raided the largest still ever found in Riverside County and noted that it was on land owned by the Temescal Water Co. Clayson was not mentioned (in the article)."

In the same column, Eldridge also states the "Things were pretty rough in Corona's early days." Stuart, Clayson's only son, told Eldridge that he remembered that his father had to twice disarm men in his office. Stuart witnessed one of these incidents and said that his father didn't use force, "He just talked them out of their guns."

Clayson developed an expertise in the area of water law in the early days of Riverside County. Said fellow partner E. Spurgeon Rothrock, "He was an expert in the fields of water and municipal law. He represented the Temescal Water Co. for many years and was instrumental in the building of the Railroad Canyon Dam."

Such was the respect that Clayson developed in the area of water law that Saunders adds, "Rather than filing litigation, citrus growers would just go see Walter to resolve their disputes in those days. They respected his opinion."

Clayson's daughter Barbara previously described to writer Iris Hayward that her father also had a kind heart. In a column for the *Daily Enterprise* dated March 3, 1972, Hayward quoted Barbara as saying "I worked in his office

for one year and found that many times he helped people who were in need and, if they didn't have any money, he many times didn't charge them. Like the country doctor, he was a country lawyer."

The historic law firm which was started by Clayson in 1910, still exists today at the corner of 6th and Main in Corona. In earlier days, the firm was known as Clayson, Stark, Rothrock & Mann. Donald Stark had joined the firm in 1949, Rothrock in 1952 and Roy Mann in 1955. Later the firm morphed into Clayson, Mann, Arend & Yaeger with Erling Arend and Derrill Yaeger having joined the firm. Today, Roland C. Bainer teams with Saunders and the firm is called Clayson, Bainer & Saunders.

During its history, the law firm has employed several other notable attorneys, including former Superior Court Judges J. William Mortland and George Grover.

Bainer and Saunders have smartly kept the prestige of Clayson's name in the firm even though he was long deceased. Local legend Walter S. Clayson died back on March 1, 1972. His wife Nell preceded him in death on June 10, 1969. He was survived by his son Stuart and daughter Barbara at the time of his passing.

Bruce Todd is a member of the RCBA History Committee, a former member of the RCBA Publications Committee, and is now happily enjoying the life of retirement.



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In Memory of



Leighton B. Tegland

March 9, 1947 — March 27, 2025

Leighton B. Tegland joined Thompson & Colegate in 1973 as an associate attorney and retired from the firm as senior partner in 1998. Leighton was a past president of the San Bernardino/Riverside Chapter of ABOTA, and a past president of the Riverside County Barristers. He was also a member of the Defense Research Institute, on the Board of Directors for the Association of Southern California Defense Counsel, and a member of the Southern California Association of Health Risk Managers. He served as a referee on the State Bar Court for 10 years and was on the mediation panel for the Court of Appeal, Fourth District, Division Two. He had a brief solo practice in Palm Desert, followed by a second career in Real Estate.

He will be remembered by all as a friend, mentor, and partner. He will be missed.

The Partners, Associates and Staff at Thompson & Colegate

Opposing Counsel: Arturo M. Cisneros

by Michael Gouveia

Arturo M. Cisneros¹ serves as a Bankruptcy Panel Chapter 7 Trustee² and as a Panel Trustee of Chapter 11 Subchapter V Trustees³ for the Central District of California.

How did you become a bankruptcy trustee?

In 1992, the United States Trustee of the Central District of California was Marcy J. K. Tiffany and she put on a seminar on being a chapter 7 trustee which I attended. Marcy knew I was interested. However, I was a young associate at my first firm and the partners didn't think it was a great idea at that time to do it. Then once I started my own firm, I received a call from Marcy asking if I was interested now and that they had an opening in Riverside. I interviewed and was appointed on the spot.

Was it much different from when you were a chapter 13 staff attorney?

Yes, much different because it was chapter 7. When I was doing the work with chapter 13 Trustee Shannon Haney, it was all about the bankruptcy plan, the terms, and whether it was feasible. Doing chapter 7 casework is working with the bankruptcy exemptions and liquidating un-exempt assets.

What do you think is the future of bankruptcy practice?

It is still very enjoyable to me. But I also see the increase in the case filings have gone up 25% this year over last year. This increase has brought in many practitioners that do not regularly practice bankruptcy law.



Arturo M. Cisneros

Personally, I like to see attorneys who specialize in bankruptcy law, because those attorneys that come in and out of the practice always make a mess of things, and they can hurt their clients. I have seen situations where people may lose their homes because they retained the wrong attorney.

Are the Dodgers⁴ going to repeat?

Of course.

I understand your son is applying to law schools, what do you tell him about being a lawyer?

I tell him to choose an area of the law that he's passionate about. He's a very compassionate person. I see him in the public sector or anywhere where he thinks he can help people.

With a law degree, he doesn't necessarily have to be a lawyer, but it is good to have the education behind him. He can go into politics. He could go into public service. I would like him to do something he is passionate about as opposed to a job where he just makes money.

He worked for our firm, he's worked for the DA office, he's done internships, and worked for a Congressman. He's doing a variety of things, and my wife and I are hopeful that he'll find his passion.

Good advice, Dad. What was the best piece of advice you received when you were starting out?

What comes to mind is my partner, Bill Malcolm.

There used to be commercial ads about Michael Jordan that said, "Be Like Mike."

And I used to teach my family and my other partners, "Be Like Bill."

He would always be courteous to people and treat people with respect.

This was his policy and I adopted it. When we had tough situations, I always would think, "What would Bill do in this situation?" Bill Malcolm would do the right thing. I think he's been the biggest influence in my career.

Thank you, Arturo.

You are welcome.

Michael Gouveia is a local bankruptcy sole practitioner who helps families in financial crisis..



¹ Arturo M. Cisneros, co-founding member and majority shareholder of Malcolm & Cisneros, a law corporation, was born in San Bernardino, California. He graduated from UCLA Law School and was president of his graduating class in 1984. He served as a Law Clerk to the Hon. William J. Lasarow, then the Chief United States Bankruptcy Judge for the Central District of California, Los Angeles Division, before clerking for the Hon. John J. Wilson, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the Central District of California, San Bernardino Division.

² United States Trustees appoint and supervise private trustees who administer bankruptcy estates under chapters 7, 11, 12, and 13 of the Bankruptcy Code. Private trustees are not government employees. They do, however, work in concert with the United States Trustee to ensure the efficiency and integrity of the bankruptcy system....The chapter 7 trustee collects assets of the debtor that are not exempt under the Bankruptcy Code, liquidates the assets, and distributes the proceeds to creditors. <https://www.justice.gov/ust/private-trustee-information>

³ Chapter 11 Subchapter V trustees are appointed on a case-by-case basis from pools created across the country....These trustees are not appointed to operate the debtor's businesses unless so ordered by the court, but instead, their primary goal is to facilitate the confirmation of a consensual plan of reorganization. <https://www.justice.gov/ust/private-trustee-information>

⁴ Arturo Cisneros = Big fan of the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Nominees for the 2025-2026 RCBA Board of Directors



The Riverside County Bar Association's Nominating Committee has nominated the following members for the 2025-2026 RCBA Board of Directors. The term of each office begins on September 1, 2025. Below are the biographies submitted by each candidate. The election will be conducted by a web based electronic voting system. Please watch your email for voting information. Election results will be announced in June.

As President-Elect for 2024-2025, Megan Demshki will automatically assume the office of president for 2025-2026.



Elizabeth A. Lord

President-Elect

I have been honored to serve our legal community for the past five years as a board member of the Riverside County Bar Association. I am asking for your support to serve as president-elect.

I have been part of the Riverside County legal community since 2005. I am a family law practitioner and partner of the law firm Lord & Brooker, APC. I received my B.A. from the University of California, Santa Cruz, in language studies. I received my J.D. from Santa Clara University and was admitted to the California Bar in December 1999. Prior to moving to Riverside County, I practiced juvenile dependency, criminal law, and family law in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties. In 2005, I relocated my family and practice to Riverside County.

Since that time, I have been involved in the local legal community serving as president and vice-president of the Mt. San Jacinto Bar Association and as a volunteer mediator to assist the court with resolving family law cases involving self-represented litigants. I have been an active member of the Riverside County Bar Association for many years. I am a regular participant in the Elves program having served as a money, wrapping, and shopping elf. I participate yearly in our excellent mock trial program by serving as a scorer. I have been a member of the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court for ten years and currently serve as an Attorney Master.

Since being elected, I have been an active member on our board. I served in organizing our 2021 Reading Day at Anna Hause Elementary School. I served as a participant to mentor UCR students interested in entering the practice of law. I currently serve as a member of the steering committee for the New Attorney Academy and participate in our mentor program. I look forward to having the opportunity to further serve our community as president-elect and would consider it a privilege.

I thank you for your consideration to allow me to continue to serve our great legal community and our community at large as president-elect of the Riverside County Bar Association.



Goushia Farook

Vice President

It is an honor to have been nominated to continue representing our community with a position for the Riverside County Bar Association Board of Directors. I have had the privilege of serving as director-at-large for two terms, secretary, and presently I serve as the chief financial officer. Prior to that, I joined the board as the president of Barristers.

I would be honored to remain on the board and continue serving our legal community.

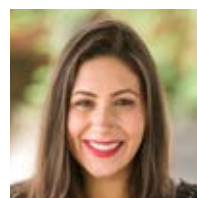
I presently have the continued privilege of being the chair for Family Law section of the RCBA with my esteemed co-chair

Michelanne Hrubic. I am also the financial director for the board of the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court.

I am currently an attorney at Bratton & Razo in downtown Riverside where I practice exclusively in the area of family law. I have been with Bratton & Razo for five years and could not be happier! To say I have found both my family, and my happy place is an understatement! I started practicing in Riverside in 2015, after relocating from San Diego and I immediately fell in love with the Riverside legal community and Bar Association. I knew the RCBA was special when I reached out for help in navigating the area of family law in a new city. The feedback and overall support I received was outstanding. I was amazed by how many attorneys were willing to take time from their hectic schedules to help me. I knew immediately this was going to be my home and I wanted to give back to my community of professional colleagues.

I am a past president of the RCBA Barristers and through it have developed lifelong friendships that I cherish immensely. I am a past board member for Inland Counties Legal Services. I have participated in the Elves Program since 2016, a tradition I carry on with my firm family.

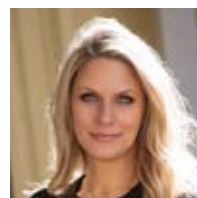
I have an immense amount of love and respect for our Bar Association and would be delighted to serve in its growth and efforts to continue making our legal community a place we all call home.



Lauren M. Vogt

Chief Financial Officer

Lauren M. Vogt is a trial lawyer at Rizio Lipinsky Heiting Law Firm in Riverside where she specializes in traumatic personal injury, wrongful death, and employment matters. Lauren has been active in the Riverside County Bar Association for many years. She previously served as president of the Barristers, the new and young attorney organization of the RCBA. She also currently sits on the RCBA Board of Directors, as well as the Riverside County Bar Foundation Board, as Secretary. Lauren is a graduate of the RCBA's New Attorney Academy and currently volunteers her time teaching at the Academy. Lauren also currently serves as President of the Consumer Attorneys of the Inland Empire (CAOIE), on the Board of Directors for the statewide organization, Consumer Attorneys of California (CAOC), and as Vice President on the Western San Bernardino County Bar Association board, where she is slated to serve as president of the organization in 2025-2026. Additionally, she has been recognized as Super Lawyers Rising Star since 2023, Best Lawyers Ones to watch since 2022, and received the CAOIE Street Fighter of the Year award in 2024. Lauren is eager to continue her involvement with the RCBA as Chief Financial Officer.



Heather A. Green

Secretary

Heather A. Green is a passionate advocate and criminal defense attorney at Blumenthal & Moore, where she handles all types of criminal defense cases, with a strength in mental health. Heather's practice centers around providing personalized and empathetic defense for individuals facing complex legal challenges.

As a Riverside native, Heather's commitment to her community runs deep. She not only takes on private cases, but also proudly accepts indigent defense work through the Riverside Conflict Defense Panel, driven by her belief that everyone deserves access to justice, regardless of their financial situation.

Her legal journey began early, starting as an intern with the 4th District Court of Appeal and later as a clerk and courtroom assistant at the Riverside County Superior Court. This rich background has shaped

her holistic approach to defense, focusing on the intersection of law and mental health.

Heather's connection to the Riverside community extends beyond her legal work. A proud alumna of University of California, Riverside and California Southern Law School, she has remained involved in local programs like the Riverside County Mock Trial, where she transitioned from a high school participant to an attorney scorer.

Beyond the courtroom, Heather is an active member of various legal and civic organizations. She serves on the board of directors for the Riverside County Bar Association, the board of governors for California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, and the board of directors for Phenix Gateway. Her leadership reflects her belief in creating a more inclusive and equitable community.

Despite her busy schedule, Heather's heart belongs to her family. She cherishes her role as mom to two wonderful children and enjoys the love and support of her husband, balancing her professional life with the joy of family time.



Chris Jensen

Secretary

I am a candidate for the Riverside County Bar Association position of secretary. I have had a fulfilling career in and for the Riverside legal community. I am honored to be nominated for the secretary position. I believe I have participated in and touched a very broad spectrum of our RCBA

positions and legal community involvement and would relish the opportunity to serve you one more time as a RCBA officer.

I began my legal career in Riverside in 1985 as a law clerk. I was a partner in a local firm for over 30 years and am now "Of Counsel" at Reid & Hellyer. Throughout my career I have had a business practice, litigation and transaction, handling matters in real property, corporate, business tort, employer/employee, management, landlord-tenant, UCC, civil procedure, construction issues, escrow items, bankruptcy litigation and much more. We always said, if a business touched it, so did we.

I joined the RCBA when I became licensed to practice. My early RCBA years, I was in awe of RCBA Presidents Jane Carney, Kurt Siedler, Sandy Leer and Ward Albert. They encouraged me to be involved and set me on my path of RCBA roles. Some of my RCBA and related highlights are:

- Civil Litigation section member and section chair.
- Founding member of an organization known as Settlement Now – Inland, the precursor of RCBA Dispute Resolution Service, Inc. (DRS).
- RCBA ADR representative/contact to the California State Bar.
- RCBA delegate to the State Bar Convention.
- Attorney member of the Riverside Superior Court Judicial ADR committee. I have had a reoccurring role on that committee to date.
- RCBA ADR Committee and committee co-chair.
- Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court.
- Founding board member of DRS; eventually chair of the board and president, and still am to this date. One of my roles with DRS has been the mediation coordinator with the Riverside Superior Court leading the fulfillment of the DRS contract with the court in providing mediations for civil, family law and probate cases. I am also a mediator and arbitrator.
- RCBA Judicial Evaluation Committee.
- RCBA Fee Arbitrator Panel.
- RCBA History Committee chair. We endeavor to preserve the history of the RCBA. You may have seen some of my articles in the RCBA monthly magazine.
- RCBA New Attorney Academy panelist.

- Member of the RCBA Board of Directors.

In 2021, I was honored to be named a recipient of the E. Aurora Hughes Meritorious Award for Service accumulating an outstanding record of service to the Riverside County Bar Association. I am grateful for that distinction but believe I still have a job to continue to earn it. RCBA being over 130 years old, is a distinguished association. It is important that we preserve and continue our important role in the legal community. Over the years, I have been impressed by the activity and involvement by our fellow RCBA members in our legal and general community. We are looked to by state and local entities for participation and opinions, justifiably so. And I want to be part of preserving that legacy and making sure that the next generation of Riverside lawyers appreciate, improve, and continue that legacy. I hope to instill in our younger members the importance and prestige of RCBA as Jane, Kurt, Sandy, and Ward did in me. I hope you will allow me to continue to participate in that role.



Melissa Cushman

Director-at-Large

Melissa Cushman is a supervising deputy county counsel at the Office of County Counsel, County of Riverside, in the land use, real estate and business transactional department, where she has practiced since 2014. Prior to her employment with Riverside County, Melissa was

an associate at Best Best & Krieger LLP's Riverside office in the Environmental and Natural Resources practice group since 2006. She does both transactional work and litigation, sitting with and advising the Riverside County Planning Commission and the Riverside County Local Agency Commission, representing clients in both state and federal court in land use and California Environmental Quality Act litigation, and advising Riverside County departments on land use and contractual matters. She is also co-chair of the Office of County Counsel's Recruiting Program, where she interviews prospective interns and oversees volunteer attorneys and clerks.

In addition to her work, Melissa is an active member of the RCBA and other local organizations. She serves on the RCBA Publications Committee, for which she is also a regular contributing author, and the RCBA Continuing Legal Education Committee, where she helps plan upcoming MCLE events, as well as participating in mock trial scoring. In the past, she has also been a member of the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court, mentored new attorneys as part of the RCBA's Mentoring Program, and participated in the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce's Leadership Riverside program. She has also co-taught or lectured in environmental and administrative law classes at University of California, Riverside, Extension Center; California State University, San Bernardino; La Verne Law School; and University of California, Los Angeles.

Melissa has deep ties to Riverside, with the Cushman family having lived in Riverside for more than one hundred years. While she was born here, her family moved to Nashville, Tennessee when she was small, and she grew up there, but visited Riverside annually to see family. She returned to the Inland Empire area for college, graduating magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Pomona College, with a B.A. in Anthropology. After living and teaching English in Argentina and Italy, she came back to California and attended law school, receiving her Juris Doctor degree from USC's Gould School of Law in 2006. She lives in a historic home in downtown Riverside with her husband Eddy Palacios, a teenage daughter, and a menagerie of cats and dogs.

Melissa says, "I very much appreciate the great work that the RCBA does and would love to be able to contribute as part of its board of directors. Thank you for your consideration!"



Summer DeVore

Director-at-Large

I am incredibly honored to have been nominated to serve as a director-at-large on the RCBA Board of Directors.

I am currently an attorney with Stream Kim Hicks Wrage & Alfaro, PC in downtown Riverside

where my practice focuses on complex business, real estate, and municipal litigation. What many may not know is that my connection to the Riverside legal community spans over two decades. My legal journey began at a law firm in the Inland Empire, where I worked as an office clerk delivering documents and doing court filings. It was then that I was first introduced to what Riverside had to offer. Each summer, the law firm participated in a softball league with other firms and legal organizations, including Barristers. While the games were often competitive, they also showed the camaraderie and civility, even among opposing counsel, that make this community truly special.

I have known for a long time just how unique and supportive the Riverside legal community is, especially through the RCBA. That's why, after passing the bar, I wanted to get involved. In my first year of practice, I completed the RCBA New Attorney Academy. A few years later, I was elected to serve as a member-at-large on the RCBA Barristers Board. The following year, I was honored to serve as president-elect, and I now have the privilege of serving as the 2024–2025 president of RCBA Barristers. In that role, I also currently serve on the RCBA Board of Directors. In addition, I am an active member of the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court.

My path through law school was unconventional. I attended evening classes part-time in Orange County while working full-time at a firm in downtown Riverside. With such a demanding schedule, there was little to no time for community involvement. Since becoming an attorney, I've made it a personal goal to give back by increasing my participation and contribution not only to the RCBA, but with the broader legal community. I feel very fortunate to have received so much support and mentorship throughout every stage of my legal career—from applying to law school and studying for the bar, to navigating the challenges of practice today. I am committed to paying that forward and continuing to serve this community that has given me so much.



Chris Johnson

Director-at-Large

As a lawyer for over thirty years, Chris has handled transactional and litigation matters in real estate, land development, merger & acquisitions, and overall business governance.

After receiving his Juris Doctorate from the University of San Diego cum laude in 1993, he obtained his initial training as an associate working with the trial lawyers in the San Diego law firm formerly known as McInnis, Fitzgerald, Rees & Sharkey. In 1998, he worked as in-house counsel for the Insurance Company of the West. From 2002–2015, he was the principal of his own law practice: Single Oak Law Offices in Temecula. In November of 2015, Chris joined Reid & Hellyer. He became a partner in February of 2017. Chris is the senior attorney responsible for the Temecula/Murrieta office.

Chris has been a member of the Riverside County Bar Association since 2010. Since that time, he has participated as a panel member during a day of "Access to the Courts" for the public and as a scoring attorney in the High School Mock Trial competitions. Chris co-chaired the Solo/Small Practice Section of the Riverside County Bar Association from 2014–2017.

As a director-at-large, Chris would strive to enhance several facets of the ongoing enterprise:

- Increase the participation and coordination of private, public, and governmental practitioners in the Association;

- Garner greater inclusion of those practitioners who practice outside of the traditional downtown area such as southwest county and the desert communities;
- Emphasize greater civility and professionalism in practical legal training curriculum such as the ongoing academy training program. Also explore the possibility of bringing that program to other regions of the county.

Chris has lived in Temecula with his wife and their two daughters since 2003. Chris and his wife now spend a lot of their "free" time meeting the needs of their 9-year-old English bulldog "Titus."



Krystal Lyons

Director-at-Large

Krystal Lyons is senior counsel at Stream, Kim, Hicks, Wrage & Alfaro, P.C. Krystal serves as trusted counsel to a broad range of clients in various industries and across a wide spectrum of practice areas, including general business, commercial litigation, eminent domain, municipal law, appellate practice, and employment law. Over the course of her career, Krystal's practice has evolved from providing legal advice and serving as trial counsel into supporting her clients in broader capacities such as personnel management, change management, and performance improvement. She has supplemented her legal experience with formal academic experience by earning an Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership and becoming certified as a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt.

Krystal's varied career includes serving as general counsel and director of legal services for the San Bernardino Superior Court, and as an instructor and administrator at University of La Verne College of Law. Krystal is the immediate past president of the Inland Empire Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, and she is currently a member of the FBA's Professional Development Committee. Krystal also serves as one of the lawyer representatives for the 9th Circuit.

Krystal received her B.A. in Business Administration from Western Michigan University; her J.D. from Wayne State University; and her Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership from the University of La Verne. Krystal is licensed to practice law in California, Michigan, and Georgia. Krystal was born in Detroit, Michigan but she has lived in several states. In her free time, she enjoys watching movies and playing video games with her husband and other members of the online gaming community.

Krystal has been involved with the Riverside County Bar Association in various capacities since she moved to California in 2013. Over the past 12 years, Krystal has collaborated with RCBA on hosting and implementing various CLE programs; she coordinated opportunities for University of La Verne College of Law students to volunteer for The Elves Program; and she coordinated various partnerships between RCBA and the Inland Empire Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, among other activities. Krystal's current firm, Stream Kim, is in downtown Riverside, and Krystal looks forward to continuing to serve the RCBA and being an active member of the Riverside legal community.



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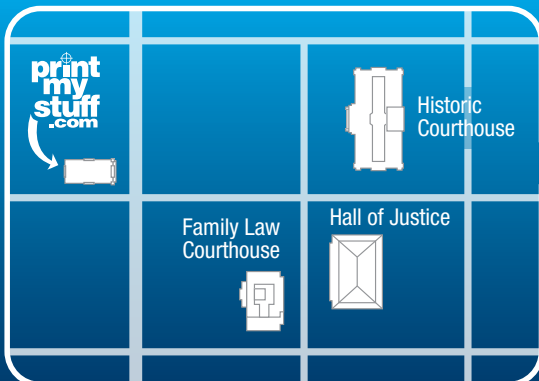
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4129 Main Street, Riverside. Next to Family Law Court, across the street from Hall of Justice and Historic Courthouse. Office suites available. Contact Charlene Nelson at the RCBA, (951) 682-1015 or rcba@riversidecountybar.com.

Conference Rooms Available – RCBA Building

Conference rooms, small offices and the Gabbert Gallery meeting room at the RCBA building are available for rent on a half-day or full-day basis. Please call for pricing information, and reserve rooms in advance, by contacting Charlene or Lisa at the RCBA office, (951) 682-1015 or rcba@riversidecountybar.com.

Riverside Superior Court Needs Temporary Judges

The Riverside Superior Court is adding attorneys to its pool of temporary judges. They are used at the discretion of the Presiding Judge when the court needs judicial assistance that it cannot provide using its full-time judicial officers. Temporary judges most often hear small claims and traffic matters. They may also preside over other types of cases, such as: unlawful detainers, civil discovery and settlements, family law, domestic violence, probate, civil harassment and juvenile delinquency and dependency. To become a temporary judge, you must have been admitted to practice as a member of the State Bar of California for at least ten years (or at least five years for an appointment with good cause). For more info about the Temporary Judges program, please go to: https://www.riverside.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/tempjudge_invitation.pdf or <https://www.riverside.courts.ca.gov/general-information/attorneys-litigants>.



The following persons have applied for membership in the Riverside County Bar Association. If there are no objections, they will become members effective May 30, 2025.

Vivian R. Anaya – Inland Counties Legal Services, Ontario

Eric M. Carrillo – Law Student, Riverside

Christian Johaana Limon – Marcus Family Law Center, El Centro

Richard W. Merritt – Inland Counties Legal Services, Riverside

Christopher D. McDonough – Marcus Family Law Center, San Diego

Lorena C. Penaloza – UCR Office of Legal Affairs, Riverside

Chad J. Pennington – Federal Public Defender's Office, Riverside

Darshann M. Wienick – Law Office of Darshann M. Wienick, Aliso Viejo



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Experienced Family Law and Criminal Law Attorneys are needed to volunteer their services as arbitrators on the RCBA Fee Arbitration Program.

If you are a member of the RCBA and can help, or for more info, please contact Lisa Yang at (951) 682-1015 or lisa@riversidecountybar.com.

* ATTENTION RCBA MEMBERS *

How would you like to receive (or read) the *Riverside Lawyer* magazine?

Some members have told us they prefer reading the online version of the *Riverside Lawyer* (at www.riversidecountybar.com) and no longer wish to receive a hard copy in the mail.

OPT-OUT: If you would prefer not to receive hard copies of future magazines, please let our office know by telephone (951-682-1015) or email (rcba@riversidecountybar.com).

CALENDAR

MAY

- 2** Probate CLE Marathon
RCBA Gabbert Gallery
8:30 AM – 2:15 PM
MCLE: 4 hours
- 5** Roundtable with Judge Hopp
12:15, Zoom
MCLE
- 7** Barristers 6th Annual Judicial Reception
5:00 – 7:30 PM
Grier Pavillion
- 13** Civil Litigation Section Meeting
Noon, Zoom
Speaker: Judge Elia V. Pirozzi (Ret.), JAMS
Topic: "Objection! The Why, How, and When of Making Objections at Trial"
MCLE
- 16** General Membership Meeting
Noon, RCBA Gabbert Gallery
New Attorney Academy Graduation
Speaker: Sharon Nelson Vidano, Light Up Your Soul LLC
Topic: "A Wellness Workshop for Attorneys"
MCLE: 1 hour Wellness Competence
Barristers Happy Hour with New Attorney Academy
2:30 PM, Lake Alice, Riverside
- 20** Family Law Section Meeting
Noon, RCBA Gabbert Gallery

Events Subject To Change

For the latest calendar information please visit the RCBA's website at riversidecountybar.com

The Riverside Lawyer is published 11 times per year by the Riverside County Bar Association (RCBA) and is distributed to RCBA members, Riverside County judges and administrative officers of the court, community leaders and others interested in the advancement of law and justice. Advertising and announcements are due by the 6th day of the month preceding publications (e.g., October 6 for the November issue). Articles are due no later than 45 days preceding publication. All articles are subject to editing. RCBA members receive a subscription automatically. Annual subscriptions are \$30.00 and single copies are \$3.50.

Submission of articles and photographs to Riverside Lawyer will be deemed to be authorization and license by the author to publish the material in the *Riverside Lawyer*. The material printed in the *Riverside Lawyer* does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the RCBA, the editorial staff, the Publication Committee, or other columnists. Legal issues are not discussed for the purpose of answering specific questions. Independent research of all issues is strongly encouraged.

MISSION STATEMENT

Established in 1894

The Riverside County Bar Association, established in 1894 to foster social interaction between the bench and bar, is a professional organization that provides continuing education and offers an arena to resolve various problems that face the justice system and attorneys practicing in Riverside County.

RCBA Statement

The mission of the Riverside County Bar Association is: To serve our members, our communities, and our legal system.

Membership Benefits

Involvement in a variety of legal entities: Lawyer Referral Service (LRS), Riverside Legal Aid, Fee Arbitration, Dispute Resolution Service (DRS), Barristers, Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court, Mock Trial, State Bar Conference of Delegates, Bridging the Gap, the RCBA - Riverside Superior Court New Attorney Academy and the Riverside Bar Foundation.

Membership meetings monthly (except July and August) with keynote speakers, and participation in the many committees and sections.

Eleven issues of *Riverside Lawyer* published each year to update you on State Bar matters, ABA issues, local court rules, open forum for communication, and timely business matters.

Social gatherings throughout the year: Installation of RCBA and Barristers Officers dinner, Law Day activities, Good Citizenship Award ceremony for Riverside County high schools, Reading Day and other special activities, Continuing Legal Education brown bag lunches and section workshops. RCBA is a certified provider for MCLE programs.



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At Altura, we're deeply rooted in Riverside, with 23 branches serving communities from the city's iconic orange groves to Murrieta's soothing hot springs. More than just a financial institution, we're your neighbors—championing your success and investing in our shared future. Since 2015, we've contributed over \$7 million and dedicated more than 20,000 volunteer hours to strengthening our communities. Member or not, our mission remains the same: to help Riverside thrive. Experience the Altura difference—because when we rise together, we all succeed.



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