



CITATIONS

OCTOBER - TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FOUR



NEWLY APPOINTED JUDGE ETHEL R. HERNANDEZ

“Treat People with Respect, No Matter the Position They Hold.”

By Ted A. Andrews

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Joshua S. Hopstone

Last month I summarized the spectrum of programming the Ventura County Bar Association and its sections and affiliates offered this summer. As the seasons begin to change and we transition toward the final quarter, the VCBA Board of Directors has been reflecting more and more on the dedication and hard work of our members and leaders. As we prepare to wrap up another successful year, I'd like to highlight a few important events coming up that exemplify our core values of leadership, service, and celebration of achievement. Each of these upcoming events serves a different yet essential purpose in the mission of our organization.

I encourage all members—whether you are currently involved in leadership or considering stepping into a new role—to attend and engage with your fellow attorneys. Here's a snapshot of what's to come:

1. Pro Bono Community Meeting - Reigniting a Tradition of Service

Our second upcoming event is a forum of the principal organizations offering volunteer-based pro bono legal services to the greater Ventura County community – the first time such an event has been offered since 1999. Each has a unique constituency and geographic area that they focus on, and by bringing everyone together, we hope to foster greater relationships, coordination and understanding. Our goal is to offer a platform for the leaders of these organizations to meet, share their experiences, and collaborate on how we can better serve those in need throughout Ventura County.

As expressed in a prior President's Message, pro bono work is at the heart of the legal profession's commitment to justice, and central to the mission statement of the VCBA. By facilitating this event, we hope to promote a countywide approach to pro bono service, ensuring that every resident in need has access to quality legal representation, regardless of their financial situation. The meeting will be held on October 17 at the offices of Ferguson Case Orr Paterson LLP in Ventura.

2. Bar Leaders Mixer - Celebrating Commitment

Our first event is a social mixer intended to recognize and thank the many volunteers who have held leadership roles in the legal community over the years. If you are a current or past member of the board, a section leader, or have been active in any of our affiliate organizations, please join and allow us to express our appreciation. It is your hard work behind the scenes, countless hours of planning, and thoughtful direction that keep the VCBA thriving.

But this event isn't just for current leaders; it's also for those who are considering stepping into a leadership role in the future. The VCBA is always looking for fresh perspectives and new ideas to continue building on the successes of the past. Leadership in an organization like ours is not only a way to give back but also a powerful opportunity for personal and professional growth. If you have not yet held a leadership position but are interested to learn about how to get involved, I personally encourage you to attend. The event will be held on October 24 at BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse in Oxnard.

3. Annual Installation and Awards Dinner – Come Together

The culmination of our year will be the Annual Installation and Awards Dinner on November 16 in Oxnard. This year's theme, "Come Together," couldn't be more timely. The dinner will take place just 11 days after the upcoming national election, a time when our nation may be grappling with conflict and division. Regardless of our personal politics or beliefs, as lawyers we are uniquely positioned to help bridge those divides by upholding our common commitment to the rule of law.

This year's event will be a moment to celebrate unity within our profession. As we install the new board of directors for 2025 and present awards to those who have gone above and beyond in their service, we are reminded that law and justice should transcend political divides. In a time when our country might be feeling fractured, the VCBA will offer a space where we can come together, honoring our duty to uphold the law, protect the rights of all, and work for the common good.

I invite each and every VCBA member to join us for this special evening. It will be a night to celebrate not only individual achievements but the collective strength and purpose of our association.

As these three events illustrate, your VCBA Board of Directors is determined to end 2024 on a strong note. Each of these events highlights a different aspect of what makes the VCBA such a vital and vibrant organization: leadership, community service, and recognition of excellence. Whether you attend to thank those who serve, explore new ways to contribute, celebrate the success of another year, or simply to connect with friends and peers, your presence will help to strengthen the bonds that make Ventura County such a special place to practice law.

Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events.



Joshua S. Hopstone
is a partner at Ferguson
Case Orr Paterson LLP.
His practice focuses on
business and real estate
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TERRY MAHURIN

2024 VERNA R. KAGAN PRO BONO SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

By Paul Bujold

The Ventura County Bar Association honors **Terry Mahurin** as the 2024 recipient of the Verna R. Kagan Ventura County Legal Aid Pro Bono Award.

“Nothing is ever as simple as it seems,” Mahurin sometimes says while scanning client intake forms at Ventura County Legal Aid’s walk-in clinic. He says it quietly and to no one in particular. Initially, I didn’t quite know what to make of this. Perhaps it reflected his point of view of the world at large or his experience as an attorney. After working with Mahurin at the clinic this year, I believe it is his way of reminding himself to actively listen to the clients - to let them tell their story and be heard. An almost unconscious technique to center himself so that he can be more present and engaged.

Mahurin had a long and successful career working as an attorney for NASA. At VCLA’s walk-in clinic, clients have a potpourri of issues: family law, unlawful detainers, unpaid debts, administrative rulings they don’t understand, etc. Given his tremendous experience and intellect, the clients’ cases could seem routine. Nothing he hasn’t handled many times. But regardless of how routine their problems are, Mahurin’s point of faith is that each client is unique, and that their story is never as simple as it might seem.

People may not be simple, but some are dependable. So dependable that they become steadfast. That’s Mahurin, who has been volunteering for decades. In 2017, the Superior Court honored 100 volunteers at an appreciation ceremony. Mahurin and another attorney received special recognition from then Presiding **Judge Patricia M. Murphy** for their “extraordinary commitment of time over many years.” Mahurin was honored for his work at the Self-Help Legal Access Center, volunteering as a judge pro tem in small claims court, and volunteer small claims mediator at the Center for Dispute Settlement.

Mahurin has attended almost every VCLA clinic this year. It technically closes at 5 p.m., but Mahurin inevitably is at a table somewhere in the stacks helping a client until someone reminds him to wrap up soon because the library staff need to go home at 5:30. He collaborates with the other pro

bono attorneys on complex cases or issues in which they have more experience. Getting things right always comes first.

Mahurin’s commitment springs from his tremendous compassion and empathy for the clients. He makes a point of connecting with everyone he talks with. Unbeknownst to him, a prelaw student recently shadowed him to capture him in action. In one afternoon, Mahurin said:

- “Perhaps you can help me understand...”
- “I hear and feel for you.”
- “I honor and hear what you’re saying.”
- “Life brings unexpected changes to all of us.”
- “It’s about finding the path that feels right for you.”
- “It’s like a puzzle, you just need to find the right piece to start with.”

When one individual was overwhelmed with multiple problems, Mahurin suggested he limit his focus to one thing at a time. “Imagine a juggler with 14 balls. The one they need to concentrate on is the one in their hand. Identify which issue is the ball in your hand and focus on that one first.”

In addition to using his interpersonal skills to put clients at ease, Mahurin uses his expert interviewing skills to guide their conversations. Once his clients feel heard, Mahurin smoothly transitions the conversation to their legal issues when the time is right. Mahurin has a gift for explaining legal issues without jargon. He uses common words, concepts, and analogies so that clients understand the legal aspects of their situation. Because they feel heard and empowered, his clients are more likely to follow through.

Maybe some things are not so complicated after all. Mahurin’s compassion, knowledge, and commitment are a gift to our profession, everyone he helps, and our community. We are all better off because of him.

Paul Bujold is the Executive Director of Ventura County Legal Aid.



MARK BURNSTEIN

2024 JAMES D. LOEBL PRO BONO AWARD RECIPIENT

By Sean Rosskopf and Aanuska Tripathi

The Ventura County Bar Association honors **Mark Burnstein** as the 2024 recipient of the James D. Loebel Ventura County Legal Aid Pro Bono Award.

A few pinches of patience, several grams of grace, and a healthy dose of empathy – these are the measures one might use to describe attorney Mark Burnstein. He is a home cook, and loves to create his dishes from scratch using simple ingredients to craft a complex meal. It is clear when watching Burnstein interact with clients at Ventura County Legal Aid's walk-in clinic that this enthusiasm for tackling intricate challenges is a part of his nature.

Burnstein has always wanted to get involved to better the community and has been volunteering for about 10 years. He started off in a dispute resolution group in Ventura, where his sense of altruism grew and cemented his desire to help others. Burnstein also has a passion for mediation. Being a volunteer mediator for a small claims firm was one of his first assignments. He enjoys meeting diverse people and wants to help make their world a better place.

Burnstein received his undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and incorporates his interest in the psychological aspect of legal work when interacting with clients. He sees each person that comes to the clinic as a member of his community and recognizes the importance of tending not just to clients' legal needs, but also their emotional needs. When interviewed, Burnstein said "People have problems, and they don't just want to solve them – they want to vent and want someone to understand their situation." He understands that while each of our clients has different needs, they must all be treated with the same respect, care, and consideration – regardless of their background.

Burnstein does so much to help others yet is very self-effacing. When asked about any big achievements or awards, he did not use the question as an opportunity to brag. He said he doesn't think about accolades, that the only sense of achievement he really considers is whether his client feels better after a session. Giving a client peace of mind is better than any award in his eyes.

Burnstein's approach to each client interaction is methodical and empathetic. He can make the people around him feel at ease and remains compassionate, while always ready to help the next person that walks through the door. Each person Burnstein speaks to leaves with a better understanding of their issue and a plan, and they leave our clinic feeling reassured.

We should all take something from Burnstein. His empathetic nature, selflessness, and commitment make him an ideal volunteer. Burnstein believes that volunteering is a great way to learn about yourself and the world around you and says all you need to start is to show up and find out what you can do. That's what Burnstein has done for 10 years.

His goals for the future include educating the public about legal issues. Burnstein wants people to have the right information

beforehand so they might not need a lawyer, but he will keep helping those who need one but can't afford the cost. He is adamant about helping people, regardless of their financial status, because he knows that everyone needs help. He sees what some choose to ignore. Burnstein's special blend of "ingredients," his patience, grace, and empathy, make him one in a million.

Burnstein has his own law practice based in Newbury Park, CA. His practice focuses on Estate Planning. www.mburnsteinlaw.com

Aanuska Tripathi is a political science major at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Sean Rosskopf is a recent graduate of Moorpark College where he was President of the Associated Students of Moorpark College. Rosskopf is headed to UCLA this fall.



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John Derrick has a background in law and business. A dual national who came to the US from the UK over 30 years ago, he is naturally skilled at helping people from all sorts of backgrounds resolve a wide variety of disputes that previously proved intractable.

Mr. Derrick's ADR practice draws in part on his experience over 20 years as an accomplished appellate lawyer. Before entering the legal profession, he co-founded, operated, and eventually sold a specialized information publishing business. He has degrees from two of the world's top five universities.

John Derrick's journey into mediation began in the appellate system in 2008 when he went on the Court of Appeal mediation panel in Los Angeles, on which he continues to serve. Today, he is a full-time mediator and arbitrator handling cases at all stages of the litigation timeline throughout Southern California and beyond.

Mr. Derrick's Practice Areas include: Business/commercial/contract, partnership disputes, real estate, employment, personal injury, other torts.



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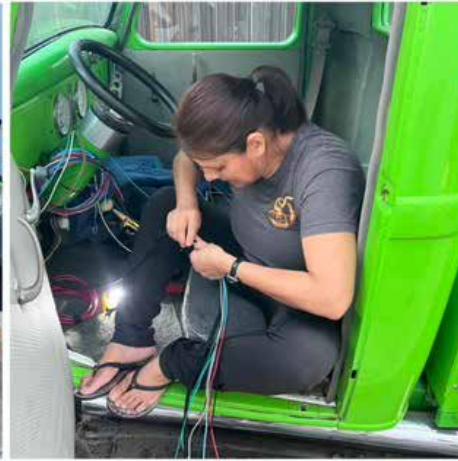
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NEWLY APPOINTED JUDGE ETHEL R. HERNANDEZ

“Treat People with Respect, No Matter the Position They Hold.”

By Ted A. Andrews



When **Judge Ethel R. Hernandez** ascended to the bench this past May, it marked another milestone along her inspiring journey through the law. Beginning with an interest early in childhood, Hernandez’s legal career has conformed to her motto, “Find a way, or make a way.” As she noted at her formal enrobement ceremony in July, Hernandez chose to define herself as an attorney by her efforts in the community and ability in the courtroom, rarely speaking about the details of her early life. She has since come to recognize the power that her story and example provide: “I hope that my road to being a judge can help others persevere towards their goal.”

At five years old, Hernandez was captivated by television courtroom shows, proclaiming “I object!” throughout her home. Growing up in a second-generation immigrant household, her parents, though unfamiliar with the legal profession, supported her ambitions. A high school internship confirmed her desire to become a deputy district attorney.

Her path took a turn in college. After her sophomore year at UCLA, she moved to Zacatecas and returned from Mexico two years later, pregnant with her daughter. Despite the added responsibilities of motherhood, she remained committed to a legal career. Determined to “stay in the legal field, but earn a living,” she enrolled in a legal administrative certificate program through a local college, completing it when her daughter was just seven months old. During this time, she balanced academics, motherhood, and her first job in law.

Hernandez’s career is marked by a broad range of legal experience. She started in Santa Barbara, working with a private practitioner in an office focused on family law, with civil and criminal casework. She enjoyed the variety, and in her work with clients, also recognized the need for Spanish-speaking professionals in the legal field. She subsequently joined the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office as a Legal Processing Assistant. As Hernandez explained, through working in the law,

“I realized that I still had the passion and drive to be an attorney.” Despite having few role models with similar backgrounds, she pressed on. “One thing that I can say about myself is that, when I have a goal, the determination sets in.”

Hernandez would like others to know that “there are tough days and tough times” but “at some point, the tough days and the sacrifices will end and be worth reaching that goal.” Hernandez returned to UCLA for two years and began applying to law schools – twenty-six, across the country. As she recounted, “now that the ball is rolling, it isn’t stopping.” Hernandez sought a program that worked well for both her and her daughter, moving to Houston to pursue her degree at Thurgood Marshall School of Law. Although she considered staying in Texas, she felt drawn back to her roots and accepted a position as Deputy District Attorney with the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office in 2012.

On behalf of the People, she held assignments prosecuting domestic violence, auto theft, and violent felonies. She often worked late nights and would bring her young daughter with her to the office on weekends, along with homework and snacks. As a former colleague in the District Attorney’s Office shared, “This left an impression on me because she was dedicated to taking care of her responsibilities in all facets of her life, even with great sacrifice.” During the pandemic, she served as courtroom deputy for the calendar in Department 14, managing trial assignments, hearing schedules, and sudden changes in case posture with calm efficiency. Department 14 was one of the few courtrooms that continued in-person appearances during the closures, upholding critical constitutional and statutory rights while navigating new concerns around Covid-19. For her work in this assignment, she was recognized as Prosecutor of the Year in 2021. She also undertook further studies for a Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice. Before her appointment to the bench, she was a senior prosecutor in VC FOCUS, the Ventura County Fentanyl and Overdose Crimes Units.

Four months into her new judicial role, Hernandez affirms, “It is the best job. The camaraderie and support from other bench

officers, along with the ability to continue serving my community, is like winning the lottery.” She values the opportunity to learn and share with judicial officers from different practice backgrounds. Hernandez brings her interest in the law to the cases before her, appreciating timely and well-researched briefs that focus on key points and contested issues. She also enjoys passing on her knowledge and providing advice to those who appear before her. “It is called the ‘practice of law’ for a reason,” she explains. After every trial, she would ask herself, “How can I improve, what can I do better?” and is open to sharing her perspective on the same with attorneys who have appeared before her, with both sides present.

Hernandez is interested in all the cases that come before her. As a judge, she is honored to “serve in that capacity, regardless of who is before me.” Her goal is to make the appropriate decision regardless of her feelings on the case. “For me, I want to afford both sides a fair trial, whether it is a DUI, petty theft or homicide.” She values thoughtful briefings at the start of a trial, ongoing research as issues arise, and sentencing briefings where appropriate, including discussions on probation terms, fines, and fees. Hernandez recognizes that the repercussions of a conviction can be significant – “Even with a DUI, the fines and fees can affect someone’s ability to make ends meet. While for some, misdemeanor consequences are not too hard, for others, it can break them.” She is interested in how these matters affect both defendants and victims.

For trial, Hernandez’s goal is to allow the parties to present their cases as they feel best within the bounds of the law. She expects decorum but does not wish courtroom atmosphere to unduly stress lawyers who are juggling witness schedules, afterhours preparation, and unrelated hearings. She asks parties to identify their desired jury instructions by number and for attorneys to request permission before entering the well during trial. As issues arise during the day, parties may ask to approach the bench; for issues outside of court, she expects communication between counsel. If additional information or authority requires revisiting a ruling, she is open to it.

One rule is quite firm in Department 47: “Treat people with respect, no matter the position they hold.” This is one of many lessons from her father that Hernandez has taken to heart. Growing up, she sometimes saw others, including her parents, treated differently because of their occupations or language skills. It is an expectation in her courtroom that everyone be treated with the same respect and that attorneys conduct themselves “courteously and respectfully, no matter what.” Her advice for attorneys is that “There are ways of doing the job and being a zealous advocate,” even during a contentious examination or argument, that still ensure witnesses and parties are treated with respect and never demeaned or degraded. From her experience on the bench and in practice, she knows that this is possible.


For Hernandez, being a judge is another way to serve the community. As an attorney, she enjoyed community involvement, especially speaking with children. During her time as a Project LEAD facilitator, she took special care and additional time to encourage elementary students who aspired

to legal careers. As one colleague shared, “When I think of [Hernandez] the first word that comes to mind is selfless. She is one of the most generous people I know. Watching her journey and all the obstacles she has overcome while remaining so kind and selfless, has been a joy to watch. She is not just an example to young people; she is an example for anyone in her presence.”

While her love for the law was established early, Hernandez has many other interests. She and her family enjoy car shows and cruise nights, own a classic Pontiac GTO, and are working on a 1937 Plymouth PT50 Pickup. Her dream car? “A ’59 or ’60 Corvette.” Hernandez looks forward to honoring her past, encouraging others, and doing her part to fulfill the office of Judge and ensure justice in Ventura County.




Edward “Ted” A. Andrews is a Senior Deputy District Attorney for the County of Ventura, and a member of the Citations Editorial Board.



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COME FLY WITH ME (AND THE FAA)

By Wendy C. Lascher

I recently flew to I flew to Portland, Oregon to visit my children and grandchildren who live there. I do that several times a year, but on this trip, I was the pilot the entire way there and back (over seven hours in the air both ways, with several stops). My longtime boyfriend Art Friedman, who co-owns our Cessna 172, has a medical condition that prevents him from flying, but his advice from the right seat was very helpful, at least most of the time. Our dog Zero, in the rear seat, did not have much to say.

The most powerful laws that affect all aviation are the laws of physics, especially gravity and aerodynamics. Then comes the Federal Aviation Administration. Pilots often say the FAA's motto is, "We're not happy until you're not happy." In fact, all aviation in the United States depends on FAA regulations, FAA certification, and FAA facilities.

Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations governs aeronautics and space. It governs all "aircraft," a category including anything intended to travel through the air: drones ("unmanned aircraft," governed by Parts 89 and 107), airplanes, helicopters, balloons, gliders, powered parachutes, and hang gliders, among others.

Private pilots like me are most concerned about three parts of the regulations: 61, 67, and 91. Part 61 covers certification of pilots, flight instructors, ground instructors. It spells out: who can "exercise the privilege" of flying or of teaching someone to fly; how pilots and instructors must demonstrate proficiency, competency, and "sound judgment," and maintain currency; and documenting experience and training in a logbook – as well as many other subjects. Parts 61 and 67 both address medical qualifications to fly depending on a pilot's medical history and the size and type of aircraft.

Part 91 is all about flying in general, including the responsibilities of the pilot in command (PIC), including: the right to deviate from any other rule in case of an in-flight emergency; the duty to assure an aircraft meets mechanical, electrical, and structural airworthiness requirements; the preflight obligation to "become familiar with all available information concerning" a flight such as weather, fuel requirements, runway length, and aircraft capabilities. Part 91 defines airspace, which is regulated

based on the size and business of the airports included and whether there are instrument approaches to the airport. Different types of airspace have different sizes (shown on aeronautical charts), different equipment and communications requirements, and sometimes speed restrictions.

Major air carriers operate out of "Class B" airports, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego (and 20 other places in the U.S.) Pilots may not enter Class B airspace without being explicitly cleared into the airspace by a controller. Burbank and Santa Barbara are Class C airports, where smaller carriers operate. Private planes are allowed in Class B and C airports, though the landing fees can be significant. Outside of these special air spaces, there are two kinds of airports. One kind has an air traffic control tower, which monitors and separates airplanes arriving on their runways. Local airports in this category include Camarillo and Oxnard. The majority of small airports do not have control towers. At these airports, which locally include Santa Paula and Santa Ynez, pilots determine which runway the wind is favoring and avoid each other by seeing the other airplanes and talking to them on the radio.

Part 91 also explains temporary flight restrictions (TFRs). For example, on our flights to Oregon and back, there were several TFRs due to firefighting. We had to dodge around these areas (or we could have flown over some of them) rather than flying in a straight line. There are often TFRs when the President or Vice-President is in town, and over professional sports stadiums during games; there is a permanent TFR over Disneyland.

There is, of course, much more to Part 91, such as section 91.21, the source of the rule prohibiting use of a cell phone on passenger airlines. (That rule is far more nuanced than flight attendants make it seem when they ask you to shut off your devices.) And of course, you will want to know that the rules for flying in Alaska are much different than throughout the rest of the country, because airplanes are so often the only way to go from place to place.

In May, President Biden signed the 1,068-page Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2024. Senator Maria

Cantwell (D-Wash.), chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, stated:

This landmark law is about reinforcing and reinvigorating the nation's aviation system. Following flight disruptions, runway close calls and consumer frustrations, this law is set to deliver the safest, most reliable aviation system in the world. Starting today, passengers will have the right to hassle-free refunds. Plane manufacturers will see more safety inspectors on factory floors and tougher safety standards from FAA. With this law, airports will have more air traffic controllers in towers and bigger investments in runway safety technology. And it will expand research and innovation to modernize air travel and boost local economies nationwide.

Whether the Act makes airlines more humane, Boeing safer, or air traffic controllers less overworked, I wanted to know what changed for private pilots like me. Very little, it appears. There are some different rules concerning training in some Robinson helicopters. Pilots flying under "Basic Med," i.e. without having to undergo annual medical certification, may now carry six passengers instead of five. And we all hope to benefit when there are more controllers and better airport facilities.

FLYING FROM SANTA PAULA TO PORTLAND

How does all this affect a trip by private plane?

Before we left for Portland, I used a popular aviation app called Foreflight to plan a route. Depending on how much stuff we pack, our plane can probably travel 350 miles before refueling, but we plan for legs no longer than 250 miles. Not only does this allow a margin of safety in case we get to an airport, and we can't land for some unanticipated reason, but it also allows bathroom breaks and a chance to stretch. We refueled in Jackson, California and Medford, Oregon, before landing at Troutdale, a small towered airport so close to Portland International that when you fly in and out, you have to stay below 1700 feet to keep out of the way of planes flying into Portland.



On the way home, we stopped again at Medford, then at Redding, California. We had planned to stop a third time (headwinds made the return trip slower) and get home all in the same day. However, a couple of interruptions during the trip had delayed us enough it was going to be dark before we reached Santa Paula. Since the runway in Santa Paula is unlighted, we chose to stop in Fresno overnight and fly the rest of the way the next morning.

Before departing I got a briefing (part of the “all available information” requirement) summarizing weather and other conditions at the departure airport, en route, and at the destination. This can be done on the internet or by speaking with a specialist by phone.

There is no tower at Santa Paula, so I broadcast on a local frequency to explain where I was and where I was going, to help other pilots in the area see and avoid me. I listened to them for the same purpose. Then, when I got above 2000 feet, I switched to a frequency that allowed me to speak to an air traffic controller with responsibility for a chunk of airspace east of Santa Paula and up to around 8,000 feet. They in turn handed me off to another controller operating on a different frequency. They tell you what frequency to switch to, but you can also look it up on a chart or on-board electronic devices.

Radar and other technology (automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast, called “ADS-B”, if you care) allows controllers to

separate planes by heading and altitude, advise pilots of nearby traffic, grant clearances to enter controlled airspace, and let control towers know you are coming. Outside the local areas covered by control towers, every controller for Southern California sits in a facility in San Diego called the SoCal Tracon, while controllers who handle traffic at higher altitudes over a larger part of the Southwest are located at the Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control Center, in Palmdale. It is, however, possible to fly from coast to coast without ever talking to any facility on the radio if you avoid controlled airspaces – but that’s not advised.

We were flying to and from Oregon under visual flight rules. That means the pilot must look outside to avoid terrain and other planes. A special rating is required to fly by instruments instead of looking out the window, allowing you to fly when visibility is low. I’m studying for that instrument rating.

Along the way, we encountered a good deal of smoke from different fires. We started the first leg of the flight home at 6,500 feet, but had to climb to 8,500, and eventually 9,500 feet so I could see ahead of me, even though we could see the ground through the smoke.

Approaching an airport, pilots listen to a broadcast about the immediate weather conditions. At typical speeds in our plane, and depending on our altitude, we start descending 15-20 miles from an airport. If the airport has a tower, the controller tells you which runway they want you to land on

and how to approach it. If you can’t see the airport, which happens more often than you might expect even in “severe clear” weather, the controller will give you vectors (compass directions) to get there, as happened to me on one of our seven landings on the Oregon trip. If there is no control tower, an airport has a prescribed pattern and altitude to fly as you approach it.

At towered airports, you cannot taxi anywhere you want. The controller will ask where you’re headed on the airport and prescribe the route. Once you arrive, you (*usually*) have a choice of filling your gas tanks yourself or using the full-service option of a fixed base operator (FBO). Some airports have landing fees if you even touch their runway (Santa Monica, for example). Others charge you only if you stay overnight. In Troutdale, we paid \$2 a night, but when we stayed at Fresno, the FBO charged us close to \$100.

An airliner flies at 32,000 feet or higher. You get to your destination faster. But flying your own plane much lower and slower lets you see much more, relate actual geography and topography to what you see on a map, and finish with a real sense of accomplishment.



Wendy C. Lascher, a partner at Ferguson Case Orr Paterson LLP, is a State Bar-certified specialist in appellate practice, as well as a private pilot. She is a former editor of CITATIONS.

BARRISTERS ANNUAL WINE & CHEESE MIXER AT FERGUSON CASE ORR PATERSON

Photos: Sandra Rubio



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HAVE YOU HEARD?

THE VENTURA SUPERIOR COURT ANNOUNCES LIMITED COURT OPERATIONS DAYS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2024 DUE TO STATE BUDGET SHORTFALLS

The Ventura Superior Court has announced that most of the courtrooms and all of the Clerk's Offices will be closed on November 27, and December 23, 24, 26, and 27, 2024 to mitigate the reduction in trial court funding for Fiscal Year 2024/25. Limited courtrooms will remain open for criminal custody calendars, preliminary hearings, criminal last-day trials, juvenile detentions, unlawful detainer, mental health, and all types of temporary restraining orders.

These days are not court holidays, so statutory deadlines will not be extended. Documents may be submitted through U.S. mail or drop boxes currently provided outside of the Hall of Justice and the Juvenile courthouse for filing papers or submitting payments. Documents placed in the boxes by 4:00 p.m. are deemed deposited for filing that same business day. eDelivery for applicable case types will be available until 4:00 p.m. The Court also anticipates implementing eFiling for Civil and Probate matters prior to the proposed closure dates, so documents may be submitted through the applicable EFSP (electronic filing service provider) and deemed deposited for filing that same day but will not be processed until after the closures. (Updated filing information will be posted on the Court's website during the week of November 12, 2024.) Most cases already calendared for hearing will be rescheduled and the affected parties notified by the Court. An exterior walk-up window on the north side of the Hall of Justice near parking lots A, B and C will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on December 24, 2024) for handling criminal/traffic and collections payments only. The East County Courthouse walk-up window will be closed but a drop box will be available in the lobby for traffic and collections payments only (no filings).

NEW PRESIDING JUDGE AND ASSISTANT PRESIDING JUDGE SELECTED FOR VENTURA SUPERIOR COURT EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2025.

The Judges of the Ventura Superior Court have elected **Judge Matthew P. Guasco** as Presiding Judge and **Judge Ryan J. Wright** as Assistant Presiding Judge. Their two-year terms will begin on January 1, 2025.

The Presiding Judge, with the assistance of the Court Executive Officer, is responsible for leading the court, establishing policies, and allocating resources in a manner that promotes equal access to justice, increases efficiency in court operations, and enhances service to the public. The Assistant Presiding Judge performs duties as assigned by the Presiding Judge, and in the absence of the Presiding Judge, exercises the powers of the Presiding Judge.

Guasco was appointed to the Ventura Superior Court by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. in December 2011. He was honored as "Judge of the Year" for 2020 by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association. He is currently serving as the Assistant Presiding Judge and has served as the Presiding Appellate Judge (2015-2017) and as the Supervising Judge of the Civil Division (2020). Guasco has been assigned to the Criminal, Appellate, Family and Civil Divisions of the Court. He has presided over more than 150 criminal and civil jury trials.

Prior to his appointment, Guasco was a professional mediator and arbitrator as well as an appellate practitioner. He served as Of Counsel to Arnold, LaRochelle, Mathews, Van Conas & Zirbel, LLP (2008 - 2010), and Norman Dowler, LLP (2001- 2008). He was a sole practitioner with Innovative Mediation (1998-2001), an associate attorney with Engle & Carobini (1993-1998), and an associate with Lascher & Lascher (1989-1993). He began his legal career as a Deputy Public Defender with the Marin County Public Defender (1985-1989).

Guasco is a past president of the Ventura County Bar Association. He is a member of the faculty of the Center for Judicial Education & Research, Judicial Council of California. Judge Guasco has served on the

workgroup appointed by the Chief Justice to develop the curriculum for judicial ethics education. He also teaches judicial ethics. Guasco is a graduate of the University of California, Davis (1980), and Golden Gate University School of Law (1984). He is currently assigned to Department 20 where he presides over limited and unlimited civil cases for all purposes, including pretrial motions and trials.

Wright was elected by Ventura County voters on June 8, 2010, and was sworn into office on January 3, 2011. He currently serves as the Supervising Judge of the Criminal Division and presides over the Court's Criminal Master Calendar.

Wright was born and raised in the City of Ventura. He attended Saint Bonaventure High School. Wright earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of California, Irvine, in 1994, and his Juris Doctor from Pepperdine University School of Law in 1997. While at Pepperdine, Wright was elected to the position of Honor Board President.

Wright began his career in public service while still in law school as a Reserve Deputy Probation Officer for the County of Los Angeles. During that time, Wright spent countless hours counseling violent juvenile offenders. It was also during that time that Wright clerked at both the Ventura County Public Defender's Office and the Ventura County District Attorney's Office.

Upon his law school graduation in 1997, Wright was offered a full-time position as a Deputy District Attorney in the Ventura County District Attorney's Office. He was promoted to Senior Deputy District Attorney in 2007. During his years as a prosecutor, Wright served in the misdemeanor, felony, sexual assault, domestic violence and narcotics units. He was also assigned full time to the Thousand Oaks Police station for two years as the community prosecutor for Thousand Oaks. Wright has been recognized with several awards as one of the top narcotics prosecutors in the state and in the nation by the United States Department of Justice, the United States Attorney's Office and the California Narcotics Association. Wright was also honored twice as Ventura County Prosecutor of the Year.

LAW STUDENT ELLIE GOMEZ TO BE AWARDED ANNUAL J. ROGER MYERS SCHOLARSHIP

By Rachel Coleman



The J. Roger Myers Scholarship Fund is proud to announce **Ellie Gomez** is the winner of its 2023-2024 scholarship. Gomez is a second-year law student at The Colleges of Law Ventura Campus. She is active in the Ventura County Barristers as a member at large assisting with event planning and recruitment of law students. She is also the Ventura Campus Vice-President of the Multicultural Law Student Association. Gomez currently works as a paralegal for Quirk Law Firm, where she works on plaintiffs' personal injury matters. Prior to her work at Quirk Law Firm, she worked as a paralegal in the local legal community since receiving her degree in Paralegal Studies in 2008. She has paralegal experience in multiple areas of law including bankruptcy, family, immigration, worker's compensation defense, in addition to personal injury matters.

After she receives her Juris Doctor and passes the bar exam, which she intends to sit for in February 2027, Gomez plans to use her law degree to benefit the local community. She intends to start her career as an attorney in personal injury law, "helping those who have been injured in accidents or lost loved ones in accidents. I especially want to focus on helping members of the community who are in lower-income communities and those who do not speak English, as I found that many people in these situations do not know there is help for them. I want to be a bridge and build trust in our local community." Being a first-generation American, Gomez noted, "Ventura County is home to many immigrant families, many working the agriculture industry, which is a staple of our county. This includes

non-English speaking families. I believe it is important to educate and inform our community members, no matter where they 'fit' in the community." Gomez is very grateful to receive this scholarship as it will assist her in continuing her education at The Colleges of Law. She will be recognized as the recipient of the J. Roger Myers Scholarship at the Ventura County Bar Association's Annual Installation and Awards Dinner on Saturday, November 16, 2024.

The J. Roger Myers scholarship was founded to honor the legacy of **J. Roger Myers**, a veteran Ventura County attorney who in 1971 co-founded the law firm that still bears his name.

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Family Law Bar Mixer

Photos: Sandra Rubio

Family Law Bar hosted a social mixer for its section members on September 26. Event was sponsored by Wayne Lorch of Lorch Greene



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