

# RIVERSIDE LAWYER

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MAGAZINE

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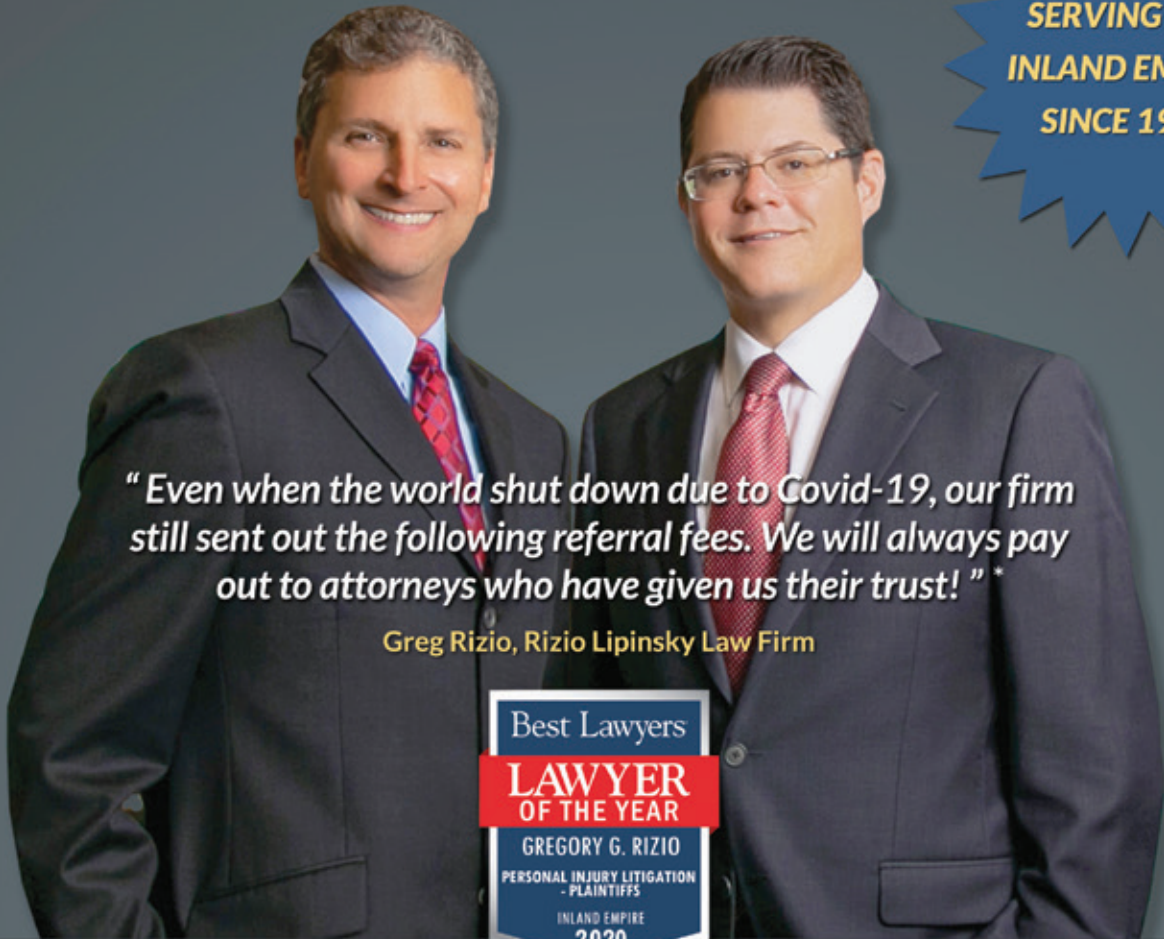
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# RIVERSIDE LAWYER

MAGAZINE

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# 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 Mission 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, Client Relations, Dispute Resolution Service (DRS), Barristers, Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court, Mock Trial, State Bar Conference of Delegates, Bridging the Gap, and the RCBA - Riverside Superior Court New Attorney Academy.

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, 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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*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.*

# CALENDAR

## November

### 9 Civil Litigation Section

Zoom

Noon

Speaker: Thomas Plunkett, Director of Digital Forensics at Archer Hall, San Diego  
Topic: "Cellphone Forensics: Applications in Discovery and Investigations"

MCLE

### 16 Family Law Section

RCBA Gabbert Gallery

Noon

Speaker & Topic: TBA

### 19 General Membership Meeting

Zoom

Noon

Speakers: Karen Blake and Ginger Wald  
Topic: "Lawyer Wellness: Burnout - You are Not Alone"

MCLE

## December

### 6 Civil Litigation Roundtable with Hon Craig Riemer

Zoom

Noon

MCLE

### 7 Juvenile Law Section

Zoom

Noon

Speaker: Dr. Richard J. Lee, M.D.

Topic: "Adolescent Depression"

MCLE

*Please see the calendar on the RCBA website ([riversidecountybar.com](http://riversidecountybar.com)) for information on how to access the Zoom meetings.*

### EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

*For the latest calendar information please visit the RCBA's website at [riversidecountybar.com](http://riversidecountybar.com).*







by Neil Okazaki

Veteran's Day comes every November and serves as an opportunity to reflect upon and honor the contributions of American veterans.

In 2006, Judge Robert Russell of Buffalo, New York noticed a sad, lethargic veteran in his mental health court. He asked two veterans who were court employees to talk to the defendant. After the meeting, the veteran "looked different — his posture was different, he stood more erect," said Judge Russell. "He indicated he was going to try harder to work on his problems."

From that experience, Judge Russell decided that veteran peer support could positively impact veteran defendants, particularly those assigned to drug and mental health courts. The next year, he partnered with the Buffalo VA Medical Center on a program whereby one day a month was set aside to exclusively focus on veterans and their needs. This became the very first Veterans Court.

Throughout California, including here in Riverside County, Veterans Courts target the root causes of veterans' criminal behavior. It is an intensive rehabilitation program that allows certain former military members who are facing misdemeanor or felony charges to possibly avoid jail and convictions. They are modeled after drug courts, which promote collaboration among the judiciary, corrections agencies, drug treatment providers, and other community support groups. The goal of these courts, authorized under Penal Code Section 1170.9, is to resolve criminal cases through treatment and support. Veterans take part in a program tailored to address their particular needs. Beginning on January 5, 2012 in Department 31 before the Honorable Mark Johnson, this program has made a difference in the legal community. The Honorable Mark Mandio, who

served six distinguished years in the United States Marine Corps, also presided over the Veterans Court for two years.

Judge Johnson has contributed an article in this month's edition of this magazine, which I encourage you to read. He served for twenty-eight years in the United States Army, including a year in Baghdad, Iraq. He retired as a colonel in October 2013, having earned a Combat Action Badge, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, and five awards of the Meritorious Service Medal.

Riverside County is fortunate to have Judge Johnson, Judge Mandio, and this extraordinary court program. Some states have no Veterans Court, according to the National Center for State Courts, and some have only one, forcing some users to travel hundreds of miles. This lack of access leaves behind many people, including in rural areas where there are great needs. Even where such courts exist, they sometimes languish due to lacking financial support, reliance on volunteer judges, and low usage.

Judge Mandio and Judge Johnson have applied their military experience to their work on the bench. Many attorneys who practice in our legal community do the same as it relates to the practice of law. The values learned in the military form the foundation of one's character. We can all learn the principles of purpose, direction, and motivation from those in our legal community who have served in the armed forces.

The recent passing of General Colin Powell reminded me about his quote about leadership: "Leadership is solving problems. The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership." There is much to be learned from military leadership, so I asked several attorneys what leadership lessons they learned from military service that they continue to apply today. The responses are valuable, and I would like to share them:

- **Nolan Chandler**--Deputy Staff Judge Advocate for Marine Corps Installations East:

*The Marine Corps Officer Candidates School's motto is ductus exemplo -- Latin for lead by example. Law contract candidates need to prove their ability to lead by example in simulated combat environments before they ever step foot in a classroom that teaches military law. I have learned that it is imperative to conduct myself properly and handle work seriously to set the climate in the office for the staff to follow suit*

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and focus on each day's tasks in order to achieve mission success.

- **Tom Chisum**--Navy Flight Officer Veteran; Deputy City Attorney at Riverside City Attorney's Office:

*The most important thing I learned was to explain to the troops what our purpose was and why they were essential for getting the mission accomplished. The maintenance people were always upset when we brought back a "down" or broken airplane to the carrier – because it was more work for them. But I learned that if I could explain to the avionics electricians the particular problem I was having with the radar, how it impacted a real mission over Iraq, and shared some of our tactics with them – they would become motivated to give us a perfectly functioning jet. Sometimes the maintenance people had ideas on things the aircrew could do differently, and so I would listen. That helped develop some camaraderie and soon the guys would give me their cameras to take up with me so I could take photos from the air.*

*In my current position working in the firm, I try to involve the paralegals and legal assistants on what we are doing and why – to give them the big picture of the case – and help them see how this declaration or motion affects that and helps us with our goal of resolving the case, so we can work as a team.*

- **Brian Cosgrove**--Marine Corp veteran; Complex Litigation Unit Supervisor at Law Offices of the Public Defender:

*The lessons learned from the Marine Corps that are still relevant today include the necessity of preparation, a strong work ethic, and the importance of teamwork.*

- **Rick Hall**--Army veteran; Senior Deputy City Attorney; Riverside City Attorney's Office:

*Collaborative leadership where everyone on the team is made to feel part of the larger mission of the unit works best in my experience. Also, an effective leader develops the skills of members of the team by delegating even though doing a task personally may be more efficient.*

- **Howard Liberman**--Navy veteran; L.A. Office Managing Attorney of Mastagni Holstedt and General Counsel for Corona Firefighters Association and Riverside City Firefighters Association:

*Get up early; look professional and groomed; be early or you are late. These seem relatively simple, but if you do this your troops will do the same. While I don't wear a uniform anymore it is important for shoes to be shined and the gig line to be straight meaning shirt buttons and belt buckle be in alignment. If you look put together; you will be put together.*

*Be respectful, tolerant, talk to people, and take an interest in people. In the military you meet and work with people from different races, cultures, religions, political affiliations, and parts of the country. By working with and opening up with people different from you (but with a shared mission) you, more often than not, realize the commonality you have with others more than the differences.*

- **Michael Ortiz**--Marine Corp Veteran; Founder & Attorney, Ortiz Law:

*I learned the 14 Marine Corps leadership traits that make up the acronym, JJ DID TIE BUCKLE: Judgement, Justice, Decisiveness, Initiative, Dependability, Tact, Integrity, Enthusiasm, Bearing, Unselfishness, Courage, Knowledge, Loyalty, and Endurance. Throughout my legal career and starting my own law practice, I return to each one of these traits and ask myself whether I can apply any of them to my current situation or problems I am facing.*

- **Doug Smith**--Marine Corp Veteran and California Air National Guard Judge Advocate; Partner at Smith Law Offices:

*Integrity always matters, strive to do the honorable thing every day, and how you conduct yourself when no one is watching is the best measure of who you truly are. So, look in the mirror every morning and ask yourself, Did I conduct myself in the right way yesterday? If you do that, all is good.*

- **Cory Weck**--Marine Corp veteran; Partner at McCune Wright Arevalo:

*There is no finer opportunity to understand what it means to be a leader than what is imbedded into you beginning day one of your training in the Marine Corps. Although there are 11 leadership principles all Marines must absorb immediately upon taking the oath of service. The two I believe all supervising attorneys should apply every day is know your staff and look out for their welfare and set the example. Our staff is our key to our success.*

Every day is a good day to remember that our freedom isn't guaranteed. Our servicemembers secured our way of life. In this issue of the Riverside Lawyer, the Riverside County Bar Association pays tribute to the members of our legal community who have served our country. We are grateful for the sacrifices they have made, and we thank them for protecting our freedoms.

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Neil Okazaki is an assistant city attorney for the City of Riverside.



# BARRISTERS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Michael Ortiz



We have a lot to celebrate this month: Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and the U.S. Marine Corps birthday. Thanksgiving kicks-off the start of the busy holiday season. And, for Marines, the Marine Corps birthday on November 10 is one of the best days of the year. But Veterans Day, in my opinion, brings deepest meaning and

purpose to the month.

While I admittedly appreciate the extra day off for Veterans Day, it is important to remember why that is. On November 11, 1918, Germany signed the armistice effectively ending all combat in World War I. The following year, President Woodrow Wilson declared "Armistice Day" to be a day "filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service . . ." It wasn't until 1938, however, that November 11 became a federal legal holiday "to be dedicated to the cause of World Peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as Armistice Day."

Armistice Day became "Veterans Day" in 1954 after World War II and the collective national desire to recognize all veterans, not just those who died in World War I. November 11, therefore, is meaningful not just for us in the United States, but in the world. It is a day to remember those lost in World War I, a day dedicated to the cause of World Peace, and a day to honor veterans for their devotion to service. One thing I love about Riverside is the evident recognition of these causes throughout the county.

We are home to Riverside National Cemetery, which itself opened on November 11, 1978, and hosts a Veterans Day ceremony annually at 11:00 a.m. Notably, Riverside's very own Medal of Honor Recipient, U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Ysmael R. Villegas (WWII), born in the Riverside neighborhood of Casa Blanca, was the first veteran buried at the cemetery. The Riverside National Cemetery is also home to one of only four of the nation's officially designated Medal of Honor Memorial sites.

As noted earlier, Veterans Day is now a day to recognize all veterans – both living and deceased – for their devotion to selfless service. For me, this means recognizing the sacrifices made by our military men and women in the past and present. Military service means giving up your own freedom to defend freedoms of others. I know many who have had to miss things we often take for granted: childbirths and birthdays, anniversaries, and other important events because they were either overseas or could not get permission to leave duty. Families

have fallen apart due to the strain military service places on all members of a veteran's family.

Combat veterans have seen or endured life's most difficult realities. Some have lost multiple friends. It is difficult for someone who has seen the atrocities of war to return to civilian society unscathed, mentally or physically. The wounds these experiences cause do not end when a veteran completes active service, as some veterans deal with physical and mental injuries for their entire lives. To make matters worse, if a veteran has any trouble reacclimating, they face risk of being stigmatized as damaged or, even worse, dangerous.

Yet if you asked any veteran whether they would go back and "sign the dotted line" again, most would. The patriotism, love of country, and devotion to service embodied by veterans is evident anytime you speak with them about their service. Though many veterans appreciate their privacy, you can often find them at your local American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), or other Veterans Service Organization (VSO). Many of these organizations host monthly fundraisers and gatherings to promote Americanism and which are open to the public. If you wanted to honor veterans, supporting your local VSO would be a great way to do so.

I was asked to speak of my service, so I will humbly do so out of respect to the cause. It was an honor and a pleasure to serve, but I sacrificed little in comparison to most. I served in the U.S. Marine Corps, Reserves from 2006 through 2012. I was lucky to have never seen combat, but the Marine Corps did a great job of breaking me down and building me back up. In the process, I learned to appreciate the littlest things in life like hot food, cold water, and a long and hot shower. What is most important to me was the opportunity to share sacred time with some great people. Now, I am here and happy to help any veterans or anyone looking for a way to help veterans.

In closing, Happy Veterans Day and Happy Birthday Marines!

## Follow Us!

For upcoming events and updates:

Website: [RiversideBarristers.org](http://RiversideBarristers.org)

Facebook: [Facebook.com/RCBABarristers/](https://www.facebook.com/RCBABarristers/)

Instagram: [@RCBABarristers](https://www.instagram.com/RCBABarristers)

If you would like to sponsor any Barristers events, request MCLE topics or community outreach events, or for any other matter, feel free to email me directly at [Mike@MikeOrtizLaw.com](mailto:Mike@MikeOrtizLaw.com).

*Michael Ortiz is an attorney at Ortiz Law, where he practices primarily estate planning and administration. He can be reached at [Mike@MikeOrtizLaw.com](mailto:Mike@MikeOrtizLaw.com).*



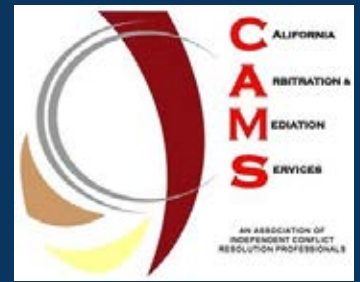




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## *Save the Date*

### **Riverside County Bar Association MCLE MARATHON**

*Webinar via Zoom*

**Friday, January 14, 2022  
10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

**MCLE Credit: 4 Hours Total**  
(1 hour Competence Issues, 2 Hours  
Legal Ethics, 1 Hour Recognition and  
Elimination of Bias)

*You may attend all or only the session(s)  
in which you need credits.  
More info will be forthcoming.*

### **Compliance Group 1 (A-G)**

*Attorneys with last names  
beginning with A – G.*

Compliance Period:  
2/1/19 – 1/31/22

Deadline to Report:  
February 1, 2022

If you are members of Group 1 and not part of an exempt group, you must complete 25 hours of continuing education courses by the deadline, including 4 hours of Legal Ethics, 1 hour of Competence Issues, and 1 hour of Recognition and Elimination of Bias.

Compliance information is available on the State Bar's website.



# COLLABORATIVE JUSTICE IN AN ADVERSARIAL SYSTEM

by Allan Fong

Every aspiring attorney is taught during law school that the United States' legal system is adversarial. And in theory, this notion makes sense. In civil cases, there are two diametrically opposed sides in every case, each with a lawyer advocating to a neutral magistrate. However, the criminal system is more nuanced. A defense attorney is an advocate for his or her client, the defendant. However, the prosecutor is charged with a loftier role that need not be in direct opposition to the defense: a minister of justice.

The prosecutor's role suggests that there should be some overlap of interests between a prosecutor and a criminal defense attorney. The pursuit of justice sometimes requires reaching across the aisle and extending a helping hand to opposing counsel. And in practice this is true, even legally enforceable. The most obvious example is that prosecutors are required to turn over exculpatory evidence to a criminal defendant. But some courts take this notion of collaboration a step further. Collaborative courts favor a system in which prosecutors and defense attorneys work alongside each other to facilitate rehabilitation of the accused.

Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) is one notable example of such a collaborative court. In Riverside, the Honorable Mark Johnson presides over VTC every Friday and I was fortunate enough to observe a session. VTC is markedly different from a typical courtroom in several ways. The day begins with discussions between a deputy district attorney, deputy public defender, three representatives from the office of Veteran's Affairs, two senior probation officers, the judge, and a military officer. Each participant is united by the common goal of deciding on how to proceed with the cases they're set to handle later in the morning.

The discussions are candid, with nearly everyone's input being accounted for. The collaborative nature of the court is obvious. The focus with regard to each defendant is not deterrence, incapacitation, or retribution. The goal is purely rehabilitation and reform. Everyone in the courtroom is searching for the road that would lead each defendant to become a contributing member of society, even a pillar of their community.

After discussions are completed and the parties know how they want to approach each case, the veterans are called into the courtroom. Judge Johnson begins the session by addressing the room, noting that the veterans have an important role in setting an example for others in the community. Then, veterans' cases are called one by one, and the court addresses updates on their status. Those who have proven themselves to be on the straight and narrow are met by words of encouragement from Judge Johnson, who recognizes that the person standing before him has undergone a change in character. He remembers each of their faces, and the state their lives were in when he first met them. The room applauds any notable achievements (of which there are plenty), and participants in the earlier discussions are quick to voice their highest regards.

Some of the veterans were struggling alcoholics without a home, suffering from PTSD or other mental illness or drug addictions. But after going through treatment, attending classes, becoming gainfully employed, or a combination of all three, they show genuine promise to be upstanding citizens. Not only

that, but they may eventually become leaders by example, who can empathize with those who stand where they were just several months prior.

Each discussion with a defendant is concluded the same way. The defense attorney representing them asks a question meant to elicit a profound response from the veteran. "What has been the most difficult part of your journey?" "What advice can you give to others who want to follow in your footsteps?" And sometimes, the veteran gives an introspective response that shows self-reflection and growth. Other times, in an equally profound manner, the veteran can only shrug his shoulders, perhaps not even realizing that the progress he has made is against all odds.

Because in the criminal system, it's not uncommon for a formerly convicted person to fall back into crime or relapse into bad habits. But this is not the overwhelming case in VTC. Not when the entire system is rooting for you to succeed. Not when a tight-knit community holds you accountable. Not when your small successes are acknowledged and your shortcomings are met with the notion that failure is unacceptable and unexpected.

It is a fascinating dynamic that serves as a stark contrast and bleak reminder of how entrenched the United States is in an adversarial system that boasts an astoundingly high rate of recidivism. Admittedly, VTC serves as an impracticable model for criminal courts. The time and human resources devoted to each defendant far exceeds the norm in criminal courts. Furthermore, the sense of community and accountability to one's peers would be difficult to replicate with people who have little or no attachment to one another. And most importantly, the defendants in VTC are hand-selected based on the legal professionals and veterans affairs personnel's belief in their ability to successfully complete the program.

But putting aside the difficulty in replicating the entirety of VTC, it might provide some insight to focus on one of the intangible results of a court program focusing on rehabilitation. This spectator was left with the impression that each defendant in VTC, though perhaps diagnosed with a chronic illness or substance abuse problem, was not defined by past bad behavior. Instead, it appeared as though they were merely down on their luck, going through a rough patch, or recovering from a troubled period in their life. And it might be semantics, but the air in that courtroom felt significantly different from a normal criminal court, in which the same faces reappear, referral sheets to classes and programs are routinely doled out, and any increment of progress is rewarded in absentia until a setback occurs.

There is no simple solution to improving the criminal system in the United States, but collaborative justice courts look like a promising shuffle in the right direction.

*Allan Fong is a post-bar law clerk with the Riverside County Office of the Public Defender. He graduated from the USC Gould School of Law in May 2021, where he served as a board member of the Southern California Review of Law and Social Justice.*



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# EFFECTIVE TRAUMA TREATMENTS FOR VETERANS

by Alison Vargas, PsyD

When the public thinks about trauma and the military, they often think about combat experiences and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, there are many kinds of traumatic events which can be experienced during military service, and some do not meet the criteria for a PTSD diagnosis, although they may still have a lasting impact. For instance, service men and woman may be exposed to dead and dying individuals outside of combat experiences (for example, in search and rescue), they may experience sexual harassment and/or assault, or they can have intensely negative interactions with civilians. Additionally, many veterans have experienced trauma prior to their military service, including histories of childhood abuse or neglect. For most people who experience a trauma, there is an initial intense reaction which fades over time. However, some people continue to have intense reactions to reminders of the trauma, even after decades have passed. For these people, trauma treatments with mental health professionals may be required.

There are many different approaches to treating trauma; however, research suggests that the most effective treatments (termed 'Evidence Based Treatments' or EBTs) will involve exposure (either in the imagination or in real life) to reminders of the trauma, sometimes referred to as 'trauma focused treatments.' Current recommendations from the VA for treating PTSD focus on these treatments as opposed to medications. These EBTs include Prolonged Exposure (PE) and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), as well as treatments focused on associated symptoms, such as Image Rehearsal Therapy to help treat nightmares or Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia. Both are available through the VA for interested veterans and the treatments are not limited to combat related traumas.

CPT typically consists of 12-16 sessions of therapy (though this may vary depending on the individual), which can be done individually or in groups. It is based on a cognitive model of trauma, arguing that people understand the world by organizing information into distinct categories called schemas. New information can be incorporated into existing schemas, or existing schemas can be modified to account for new information. After a trauma, individuals may experience disruptions in their schemas which create inaccurate self-statements, termed as "stuck points," which interrupt the natural recovery from trauma. These particularly may occur in beliefs related to safety, trust, power, esteem, and intimacy. Veterans who attend CPT will learn to identify, challenge, and change these stuck points, developing healthier schemas and ultimately recovering from PTSD. The therapy may or may not also include a "trauma narrative," where the individual focusing on telling the story of their trauma and how it has impacted; that narrative is re-examined over the course of treatment to determine how it has changed over time.

PE consists of 8-15, 90 minute therapy sessions, and is done individually. This treatment was developed from Emotional Processing Theory. The basic premise is that individuals who develop PTSD after a trauma do so because they have patho-

logical emotional structures (particularly those related to fear), which need to be modified for recovery to occur. In other words, the veteran with trauma may attach an intense emotional or physiological response to reminders of the trauma and then have negative thoughts regarding the meaning of their emotional or physiological response. This then becomes pathological when someone who has experienced a trauma treats a relatively safe situation (e.g., going to dinner in a restaurant) as though it is extremely dangerous, and therefore either avoiding the situation or responding with considerable distress (e.g., heart pounding). PE works by modifying this response through exposure to the feared, but safe stimuli (requiring them to stay in the situation until the distress responses diminishes by a pre-determined amount). This will teach the veteran that there is no danger, distress will not last forever, and they can manage their negative emotions.

Some veterans may feel unprepared to talk about, or even think about, their traumatic experiences. Those individuals may benefit from learning relaxation techniques, such as mindfulness meditation. They may also benefit from medications (which should primarily be targeted at helping them tolerate their distressing emotions well enough to engage in psychotherapy) or supportive therapies, which may help them address daily stressors which are contributing to the problems brought on by PTSD. Additionally, many veterans with PTSD have co-occurring substance use disorders and they may benefit from treatment focusing on sobriety prior to beginning PTSD treatment. One treatment that focuses on both concurrently is Seeking Safety, which is generally conducted as a group and draws attention to the ways in which substance use and PTSD overlap and intersect.

Although many veterans believe that PTSD is a life-long disorder, the truth is that there are many effective treatments to help manage and decrease PTSD symptoms. While nothing can take away traumatic experiences which have happened in the past, veterans can learn to change their relationship with those experiences and return to living full lives. While symptoms may never completely disappear, with treatment, they can re-engage with their family and friends, and symptoms can become manageable.

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a veteran in crisis, should contact the Veterans' Crisis Line for confidential crisis intervention and support available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Call 1-800- 273-8255 and Press 1, text to 838255, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat).

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*Alison Vargas, PsyD, is an inpatient psychologist at Loma Linda VA Hospital and assistant professor at Loma Linda University School of Medicine.*



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# MENTAL ILLNESS IN VETERANS

by *Leia Gill, M.D.*

“There are gray Indians in the trees out there, waiting to shoot me.” A very tall, disheveled man with dark untrimmed hair and beard peered through a crack in a motel door, chain still on the door, bright blue eyes wide with fear. I was about nine years old and that was my first memorable experience with a veteran with a psychiatric diagnosis. My uncle, Thomas, a Vietnam veteran, was diagnosed with schizophrenia during his second tour in Vietnam and was brought back to the U.S., where he spent months in a psychiatric hospital. He, like many Vietnam veterans, was treated poorly by society generally and the Veteran’s Affairs system particularly. Once he was released from the military, he avoided returning to any hospital, much less a VA hospital, for over 30 years, until he became quite ill with uncontrolled diabetes. He ultimately died far too early, at age 59, from a combination of neglected medical and psychiatric issues. Getting treatment for his mental health issues may have enabled him to live a longer and healthier life.

Military service offers many benefits, including job skills, a sense of pride and belonging, growth, and discipline, but the military is simultaneously challenging and serving can contribute to mental health conditions. Veterans are diagnosed with mental illnesses at similar rates as the non-veteran population, however, there are oftentimes social factors that worsen the course of their illnesses. Many veterans struggle with reintegration with the non-veteran population after they leave the service, particularly when they had hoped to be career military, but an injury or other problem limited their ability to serve. Often, they struggle with lack of purpose or meaning, and some lack solid family support to help them through the transition. In addition to their mental health diagnoses, veterans frequently have co-occurring medical issues that make having a normal life and regular job difficult – chronic pain and limited functionality from injuries, sleep apnea, traumatic brain injury, higher risk of diabetes and heart disease (especially with

Agent Orange exposure), and higher risk of some cancers. Substance use is common, and, as in non-Veterans, is often used to manage negative feelings.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, is the most well-known of all mental health disorders in veterans, but is poorly understood by many people. PTSD may occur after a person has been exposed to a traumatic event, and the risk of developing PTSD increases with the more traumatic experiences a person has had. Childhood abuse, sexual trauma, combat, domestic violence, and exposure such as that of first responders, may cause or increase the risk of later developing PTSD. Unlike the portrayals in movies, veterans with PTSD often do all they can to avoid triggers, including crowds, loud noises, certain places, and people. The avoidance may extend to the VA system and any reminders of their military service. They frequently do not sleep well, and if they do sleep, they may wake multiple times per night from nightmares or common co-occurring medical problems, such as sleep apnea. At times, some may act out their nightmares, potentially resulting in injury to anyone sleeping near them. Flashbacks may also occur, and can be described as relatively short dissociative episodes, during which the person feels and acts as though they are in the traumatic situation again. Most flashbacks resolve quickly without external intervention and usually with no negative consequences.

Depression is one of the most common mental health disorders in both veterans and non-veterans. Depression is not simply sadness; it is long-lasting and intensely negative. The biggest indication of depression is usually feeling down or apathetic, and others may notice a lack of energy and motivation. Listening to happy music or doing something enjoyable brings minimal relief, if any. Depression often requires professional interventions, such as medication and therapy, to fully resolve. Suicidal thoughts are very common in depression, and veterans are 1.5x as likely to complete suicide as non-veterans. At times, the first external sign of depression may

be a veteran signing over his possessions to loved ones. This may be a red flag that a veteran is contemplating suicide.

Schizophrenia is not uncommon in veterans. The age of onset of schizophrenia in males is between 15-25, correlating with the age most veterans are first recruited or drafted. (In females, the onset is later, between 25-35.) Schizophrenia may present subtly, eventually resulting in severe self-neglect, such as not showering, not keeping one’s gear in order, and withdrawing from others. It may also present obviously with paranoia, delusions, and hallucinations. Although there is a stereotype that people with schizophrenia are dangerous, they are far more likely to be victims than perpetrators of crimes. They are also far more likely to have insecure housing, due in part to the combination of isolation and

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paranoia. Often, veterans with schizophrenia are very susceptible to undue influence, being convinced to give others their money, or pulled into potentially dangerous situations.

Bipolar disorder is frequently misdiagnosed, but when it is present, can lead to several serious problems, including legal. Contrary to its colloquial usage, bipolar disorder is not simply severe mood swings, such as sadness and anger, but a lifelong, debilitating illness. Although episodes of depression are common in bipolar, mania is the hallmark of bipolar disorder, and is characterized by increased energy, rapid thoughts and speech, larger than life plans or ideas, and needing very little or no sleep. These episodes must last at least one week, and frequently last several weeks or even months. During a manic episode, a veteran will be very different from their usual self, and may start multiple businesses, buy far more than they can afford, go into debt, have an increased sex drive, gamble hundreds of thousands of dollars, and even become delusional, believing they are God, the president, or other important persons. Many very successful people are bipolar, and it can be managed with medications.

Alcohol and other substance use disorders are highly prevalent in the veteran population, seen at rates similar to the non-veteran population. Because of this, some veterans are known to the justice system before they have ever been seen at a VA hospital. Since substance use is frequently accompanied by mental health and medical issues, addressing only the substance use is insufficient for lasting recovery. The VA has programs such as Veteran's Justice Outreach, to help veterans facing legal problems to get treatment, not only for substance abuse, but for any underlying mental health and medical problems as well. This summary of the most common mental health diagnoses in veterans is by no means exhaustive. The VA has treatment, both inpatient and outpatient, for a wide variety of mental health and substance use issues.

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a veteran in crisis, should contact the Veterans' Crisis Line for confidential crisis intervention and support available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, text to 838255, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat).

The views and opinions expressed in this article do not reflect the policies or views of the VA.

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# RIVERSIDE'S COLLABORATIVE JUSTICE COURT FOR VETERANS

*by Colleen Lawler*

“Grateful” is a word often conveyed by veterans who participate in Riverside County’s Veterans Treatment Court every Friday in the Hall of Justice. At first, a veteran may simply be grateful that there is an alternative available to him in the criminal justice system other than the traditional punishment of custody or work release. As they progress through the four phases of the program, many veterans begin to speak about other things they are grateful for, such as securing stable housing through Veterans Affairs, reuniting with children or other previously alienated family members, getting their finances in order, obtaining employment, starting or finishing their college education, and maintaining their sobriety. By the time veterans are ready to graduate, most speak about how grateful they are for the opportunity to have participated in Veterans Court.

In 2012, the California Legislature amended Penal Code section 1170.9, creating a collaborative treatment court specifically for veterans charged with felonies or misdemeanors. In recognition of their service and sacrifice, the updated statute was designed to treat veterans for their military related mental health issues and to lower the criminal recidivism rate. To date, hundreds of veterans in Riverside County have graduated from the 18-month program and have their lives back on track. PC 1170.9 not only provides for treatment for veterans, but also restorative relief for those who successfully complete the program.

The common factor among veteran court participants is that they are suffering from a military related disability such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse or sexual trauma. Conditioned by their military training to always be strong, it never occurred to many veterans to seek help prior to coming to vet court. Others believed asking for help was a sign of weakness. As a result, their mental health only worsened over time, leading to unhealthy habits and lifestyle choices and eventually resulting in some veterans having contact with the criminal justice system. At the point where they’ve been charged with a crime and arrive in veterans court, many have been living their life in isolation, and suffering from alcohol and substance abuse, in a never-ending cycle of trying to forget the horrors of war, the loss of close friends, and the traumatic images from combat that they can’t forget.

The vet court participants are mostly men, from all branches of the United States military. Many of them had been deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan. A smaller number served in Vietnam. It is humbling to hear their stories of war and combat. They have received a variety of medals and even purple hearts. Some had performed acts of heroism and saved others to their own physical detriment.

The treatment each veteran receives while in the program is based on their own individual need. An entire dedicated vet court team works to assist the participants and address all their needs. Their defense attorney advocates for the veteran to get into the vet court program and assists with their legal needs. The VA and Riverside County Mental Health are also present in court to assess the veteran and recommend a specific treatment plan. The VA also assists with housing and employment. VA representatives are present at each court hearing to provide updates on the participant’s progress in treatment or report any problems to the judge and the district attorney. The probation officer ensures all participants are maintaining their sobriety with random drug and alcohol tests and home visits. A veteran mentor is also available anytime the veteran feels like they need to speak to someone. The participants are required to go to court frequently to talk to the judge about their progress and the positive changes they are making in their lives. The transformation in each veteran becomes obvious over time, as they become less guarded and smile and laugh more.

Veterans court provides a unique place in the justice system that understands and addresses the specific needs of veterans. They are amongst others who know exactly what veterans have experienced. The support they had for others during their service is often the same shared support they provide each other while in the program, in group counseling and in maintaining their sobriety. Many of the program graduates maintain their friendships with each other long after they have completed the program. Some have chosen careers that directly assist other veterans who may, at some point, find themselves in a similar place as the participants in this program.

*Colleen Lawler has worked as an attorney in Riverside County for 20 years, most of that time in the Public Defender’s Office. She has represented veterans in the Veterans Treatment Court for over 5 years.*





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# RIVERSIDE COUNTY VETERANS COURT: THOSE WE'VE LOST

by Honorable Mark Johnson

I had been a judge for two years when Presiding Judge Sherrill Ellsworth asked me to lead a committee to create the Riverside County Veterans Court. For six months, I chaired meetings with representatives from county agencies, veterans' groups and the Veterans Administration. Our first session was held on January 5, 2012.

Veterans Court is a collaborative court, based on the drug court model. To enter our 18-month program, the veteran must plead guilty and be placed on probation. Veterans are drug-tested three times each week and come to court every Friday. With close judicial supervision, the judge can address problems before they get out of hand. Positive behavior is rewarded. This is far different than in most courts, where it can take months to address violations.

Relapses are expected as part of the recovery process. Some veterans relapse a dozen times before achieving lasting sobriety.

I believed I was perfect for the court. As a retired Army colonel and Iraq War veteran with 28 years in uniform, I understood the challenges facing our veterans.

Drawing on leadership skills gained from company and battalion command, I saw my role as greater than that of a judge. Presiding over Veterans Court would be a sacred trust between the veterans, the public, and myself. These veterans would know that I was there to help them regain their honor. We would give back to society together. I would lead from the front.

We have rehabilitated several hundred veterans. So many were strung out and dying. They have reunited with family and friends, are living in safe housing, work good jobs and attend college. One veteran facing state prison for a serious assault is in law school. Another is a successful screenwriter.

Back then, I did not understand how much is at stake in working to rehabilitate suffering veterans. Since the court began, we have lost four veterans to suicides or drug overdoses.

Matt Stucky was the first.



Matt Stucky

I liked Matt. He was a tough guy – muscular, six-foot-two, 220 pounds – a decorated Marine whose life fell apart when he left the Corps. Matt came home from war with an honorable discharge, traumatic brain injury, and a bad case of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He turned to methamphetamine to alleviate symptoms

and, like many veterans who make that choice, found himself addicted and charged with violent felonies.

Matt's last appearance in Veterans Court was on March 4, 2016. He had been in our program for almost one year. Veterans who commit to the program usually show great progress after a year. By that time, most have come to understand their triggers and have developed healthy coping mechanisms.

Not Matt. He had just returned from 60 days at a residential drug-treatment facility and had tested positive for meth again. Standing before me, he looked like he was trying to shrink, adopting the posture of a 6-year-old boy in big trouble.

"How do I help you?" I asked. "I am tired of sanctioning you, Matt."

He began to cry. "I don't have a mission anymore," he said.

I have worked with hundreds of male combat veterans who feel that way. Their lives once had great purpose. They led men into battle and had tight bonds with warriors who watched their six, then return home to a world they no longer understand. Behaviors that once made sense – aggression, hypervigilance – now get them into trouble. Flashbacks become the norm. The legal system does not trust them with their children.

Like Matt, these veterans turn to alcohol and illegal drugs to alleviate symptoms. Then everything gets worse and the veteran finds himself in my court.

I talked with Matt's treatment team. As treatment, we would find Matt another residential program. As a sanction, Matt was ordered to work 20 hours at a horse rescue. I thought working with horses would help him.

But Matt never did work with those horses. Twelve days later, he was found dead on a bed in a Motel 6 in San Bernardino. The cause of death was "Chronic Methamphetamine Abuse." The San Bernardino County coroner could not determine whether it was suicide or an accidental overdose by a man who gave up.

Six months later, I was reassigned to a new position in Banning. I had presided over Veterans Court for five years and was burned out working with veterans. I found myself losing my temper more and more. I saw failure in every relapse. But nothing had changed. We were still helping humans who needed assistance.

In the two and a half years I was away from Veterans Court, two veterans died. Dakota Flanagan, who I never



Dakota Flanagan



met, was a handsome young guy with severe PTSD. I know him only through a photo, where he is smiling while carrying his 6-month-old son.

In September 2018, a few months after the photo was taken, Dakota shot himself in the head.



*Matthew Rodriguez*

Suffering veterans do best with in-person interaction with their treatment team and fellow veterans – yet so much recent treatment has been conducted on computer screens through programs like Zoom.

Matthew Rodriguez was 6'4" with a big smile. I accepted him into the court. He died of a drug overdose in October 2018. I never saw it coming.

Despite these losses and the heartbreak that accompanied them, I missed the sense of purpose I had in working with veterans. Veterans were my people. I asked to return and, in April 2019, was reassigned to Veterans Court.

The two and a half years since I came back have been rough, primarily because of COVID-19.

In May 2020, Joshua Fred died of a meth and fentanyl overdose. Good kid. He was 23 and ill at ease standing before me. His mother, Denise, found him in the closet in his bedroom, face down in vomit.



*Joshua Fred*

I called Denise after Joshua died. She blamed her son's death on COVID-19. "He was doing so good in your program, Your Honor," she told me. "He loved court, loved being with the other vets. Then COVID shut everything down. Zoom meetings weren't enough for Joshua. He fell apart."

Warriors suffer moral injuries for doing things they find unforgivable. Suicide kills so many brothers and sisters. The veteran suicide rate is more than double that of civilians. The veteran addiction rate is also double that of civilians.

On a wall in the Riverside Veterans Court are four plaques. One is a tribute to Matt Stucky that we displayed at his service. The others are photographs of Matthew Rodriguez, Dakota Flanagan, and Joshua Fred.

When struggling to do the right thing, I look to them.

*Honorable Mark Johnson is a California Superior Court judge, a retired U.S. Army colonel and an Iraq War veteran. For eight years, he has presided over the Riverside County Veterans Court.*



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# NEW CONSUMER RIGHTS CLINIC AIMS TO HELP VETERANS, SENIORS, AND OTHERS WITH DEBT COLLECTION SUITS

by Margaret Austin

Veterans face a host of issues after returning to civilian life, as some struggle with unemployment, disabilities, and mental health – all of which can lead to quality-of-life issues like homelessness or bankruptcy. One client of Inland Counties Legal Services suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and a Traumatic Brain Injury that affects his memory, and he found himself facing a debt collection lawsuit last year after forgetting monthly payments.

A commercial truck driver and father of three kids, the man turned to Inland Counties Legal Services (ICLS) for help. He was able to settle his debts, get rid of the monthly payments, and get back to focusing on his family and recovery.

ICLS has a goal of assisting more people in similar positions in San Bernardino -- whether they're veterans, elderly, or living in poverty -- through a new Consumer Rights Clinic offered in partnership with the San Bernardino Superior Court.

ICLS Consumer Practice Group Director Greg Armstrong expects to see more than 8,000 debt collection filings this year in San Bernardino alone. With the effects of COVID-19, and with such a high demand on the horizon, the local legal community has the power to help by volunteering for the Consumer Rights Clinic.

"Imagine helping a domestic violence survivor get out of debt from identity theft or helping a veteran get back on their feet after losing their job," Armstrong said. "ICLS's Consumer team is proud to be able to offer tools to aid our most vulnerable consumers, and we want to share that rewarding experience with members of the Bar in our community."

Each clinic assist takes about an hour and volunteers will ideally contribute at least two hours a month. The clinics take place virtually over Zoom, so no in-person activities are required. If you're interested in volunteering, you can reach out to [volunteer@icls.org](mailto:volunteer@icls.org).

As the number of Consumer Rights Clinic volunteers increases, so will the number of residents who will be able to receive assistance. The initial target of ICLS is to recruit 10 volunteers, but has the goal of more than doubling that and expanding into Riverside, as well.

"It is incredibly rewarding to realize that you have helped a consumer out of a stressful debt collection situation and given them the freedom to move forward with their lives," Armstrong said.

Still, vast majority of affected consumers do not reach out for help. They might not even know it's there. According to Armstrong, many cases result in a default judgment because consumers don't respond. The Consumer Rights Clinic aims to change the status quo and help more residents access help that can dramatically improve their situation. Volunteers make that possible.

ICLS also offers a variety of pro bono opportunities in each of the organization's practice groups for professionals with other forms of expertise. If you're interested in using your skills to ensure a veteran's insurance covers his medical bills for prostate cancer treatment, or to help someone secure their unemployment or CalFresh benefits, or to help stop wrongful evictions, email [volunteer@icls.org](mailto:volunteer@icls.org). If you are a veteran seeking assistance with an issue similar to those listed, head to [inlandlegal.org](http://inlandlegal.org) to see what services ICLS has available.

*Margaret Austin is the communications manager at ICLS. With a background in journalism, she handles both internal and external communications for the legal aid organization as part of the community engagement practice group. She can be reached at [maustin@icls.org](mailto:maustin@icls.org).*



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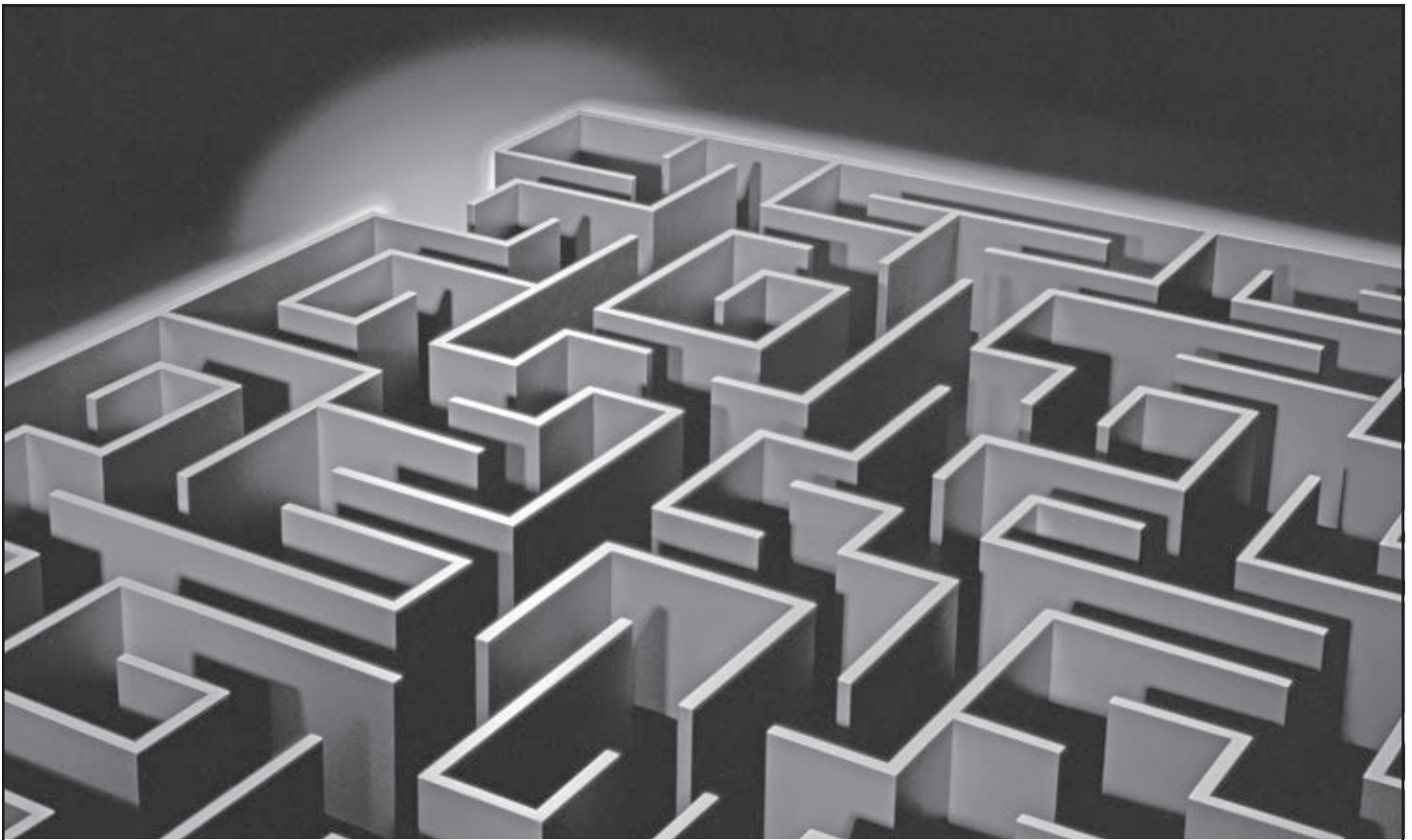
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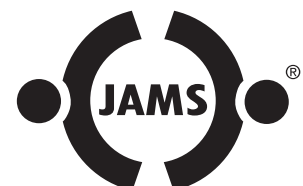


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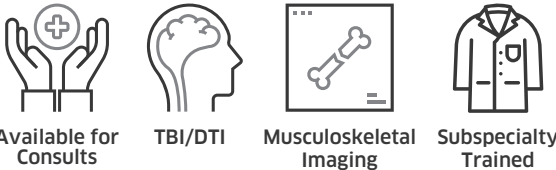
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# THE RCBA ELVES PROGRAM – SEASON XX

by Brian C. Percy

Where were you in 2002? The proverbial “they” say “Time flies when you’re having fun!” and it is hard to believe that time has flown this much, but the indisputable fact remains: this Christmas, your RCBA Elves Program will have helped to provide Christmas to local families in need for twenty (20, yes, XX) years! This will be our 20th opportunity to show the local community that supports us that we care and do give back.

As I write this, I have no sense of the numbers yet, but I am anticipating that we will still be facing more needy families this year than last year. Hopefully, we will not find things to be as bad as they were when the economy faltered back in 2008 and 2009. Regardless, your RCBA will be there to allow the RCBA Holiday Elves to do what we do best... provide opportunities for you, your family, your staff, your colleagues, and friends to become an Elf and share your time, talents, and interests with these local families in need.

While we successfully navigated our way through various COVID restrictions last year, one component that was lost was providing our Wrapping Elves the opportunity to socialize while they wrap. While things have opened back up, somewhat, the RCBA, out of an abundance of caution, has decided to keep last year’s wrapping protocols in place one more season. Therefore, this year our Wrapping Elves will still be wrapping remotely.

So, the two big questions for you are these: How many Elf categories do you want to participate in this season and how many people can you recruit to help?



Head Elf Brian Percy

**Shopping Elves:** We will again be shopping at **Riverside’s Walmart Supercenter** located at **6250 Valley Springs Parkway, Riverside, 92507, this year on Monday, December 13, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.**

As a Shopping Elf, you will receive a Christmas “wish list” from your adoptive families. Your job is simple—shop and fill your basket with as many gifts as possible within the dollar amount given to you at the start of the evening by our Head Elf, (Me). This is a real opportunity to test or show off your “value” shopping skills. Many of our Shopping Elves have



Judge Koosed and Family 2008



Diane Renteria and daughter, Marina Kaye 2010



Bill and Pam Bratton 2011



Harry & Sherise Histen 2011

made this a family affair using its younger members to assist in selecting the “cool” gifts for the kids, while learning about the value of charity and the joy of giving to the less fortunate. Some law offices bring their entire staff and



are joined by their families and make this a night of bonding. Whatever the motivation, please put on an Elf cap and come and join us. A good time will be had by all.

Last year, besides our venue change to Walmart, we also asked every shopping Elf to stay with their shopping carts as they moved through the checkout queue. This proved to be very helpful as it allowed us to process the carts faster and in a more organized fashion. So, this new process will remain.

As always, if you'd like to stay and help with the bagging and tagging process (which involves ensuring the bagging of the gifts at the registers is organized by family member), your assistance would be welcomed.



*Wrapping Elves 2006*

**Wrapping Elves:** After the Shopping Elves finish their job, Wrapping Elves swing into action. Wrapping Elves must ensure that all the gifts are tagged and assembled by family to allow for easy pick up and distribution by the Delivery Elves.

Once again, we will ask the Wrapping Elves to come to the RCBA at a designated day and time to pick up a bundle of gifts and wrapping supplies. You will then have 2 days to take the gifts back to wrap at your home or office (fun for the whole family or staff!) and return the gifts to the RCBA offices so they can be made ready for the Delivery Elves to pick up.

If you happen to be one of those very generous Elves who wraps and delivers, then you will not have to return the wrapped gifts back to the RCBA, but you will have to return to the RCBA to turn in your wrapping supplies and pick up the delivery instructions and gift cards so you can make arrangements to deliver to the families that work within your schedule.

To help us plan, I would like all **Wrapping Elves** to contact the RCBA by **no later than December 10th to identify themselves and their email address**, so they can be contacted as late as a day before the designated wrapping days on the process that will be implemented. Remember, excellent wrapping and organizational skills are welcomed, but are not required.

**Delivery Elves:** If you need a way to kick-start the warm holiday glow inside and out or just want to feel like Santa on Christmas Eve, this is it! Over the years, many members

have expressed that delivering gifts to the families was by far one of the most heart-warming Elf experiences. It is also a good opportunity to teach your young ones early the rewarding feeling of helping those less fortunate than themselves. When signing up, please inform us of the type of vehicle you have, so we can match the number and size of gifts to the storage area available in your vehicle.

Depending on the total number of families adopted, **Delivery Elves** are needed to personally deliver the wrapped gifts to each of our families. Packages must be picked up from RCBA from **December 20 to 22**. This part of the program has been designed to accommodate your personal schedules.

**Money Elves:** The Money Elves provide the means necessary for the other Elves to shop, wrap, and deliver presents to the families we adopt. Donations received will fund gifts purchased from Walmart and the purchase of gift cards from Stater Bros., so the families can buy food for a nice holiday dinner and the purchase of gas cards so they can get to the grocery store. The more money we raise means a greater number of families we can assist. (Remember our goal is 60+ families this year.)

**You can really help us by sending in your donation early**, which will allow us to determine our budget for the number of families we help. Most funds need to be donated no later than December 13, to allow for the big shopping night, but late donations can still be used for the food and gas cards. Please note, even if you are a procrastinator, we will accept money after December 20. Monies received this late will be applied to any last minute "add on" families or will be saved to get us ahead on donations for next year.

Please make your checks payable to the RCBA Foundation and write "Elves Program" in the memo section of the check. The RCBA Foundation is a 501(c)(3), so all donations for this project are tax deductible. The RCBA Foundation Tax ID# is 47-4971260. Please send your checks directly to the RCBA. We thank you in advance for your holiday generosity.

To become a Shopping, Wrapping, Delivery, or Money Elf (or a combination of these), please phone your pledge to the RCBA at (951) 682-1015 and email your name and desired Elf designation(s) to one of the following: Charlene Nelson ([charlene@riversidecountybar.com](mailto:charlene@riversidecountybar.com)), Lisa Yang ([lisa@riversidecountybar.com](mailto:lisa@riversidecountybar.com)), Brian Percy ([bpearcy@bpearcy.com](mailto:bpearcy@bpearcy.com)), or Mr. Percy's assistant, Anna Gherity ([agherity@bpearcy.com](mailto:agherity@bpearcy.com)). You can also reach Anna at 951-686-1584.

To those who have participated in the past, "Thank you" and to those who join us for the first time this year, we look forward to meeting you. Don't forget to tell a friend or two or three!

*Brian C. Percy was president of the RCBA in 2002 and is the chair ("Head Elf") of the Elves Program.*



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## CLASSIFIEDS

### Office Space – RCBA Building

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@riverside-countybar.com.

### Office Space – Downtown Riverside

Riverside Legal & Professional Center. Downtown Riverside walking distance to Courthouse. Private Executive Suite offices, virtual offices and conference rooms rental available. We offer a state of the art phone system, professional receptionist and free parking for tenants and clients. Accessible from the 91, 60 and 215 freeways. (951) 782-8089.

### Conference Rooms Available

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 – Update on Mandatory Date for Civil eFiling

Due to local rule requirements, the Riverside Superior Court is revising its mandatory date for Civil eFiling to January 1, 2022. This means that the court will remain in our optional (voluntary) period for eFiling until then. eSubmit will remain available for small claims, UDs and civil until January 1, 2022.

### Riverside Superior Court Committee to Eliminate Bias – Seeking Public Comment

The Riverside County Superior Court joins the California Supreme Court in condemning racism, historical biases, and discrimination in all forms. We recognize and accept that there is much work to do to ensure equality and inclusion are a reality for all. We continue to evaluate and address our commitment to uphold our constitutional values to ensure equal justice to all who appear before us and the communities we serve. As part of our Mission, we value any input you may have. This anonymous survey will be used to identify issues that exist internally within the Court with either explicit or implicit bias. <https://forms.riverside.courts.ca.gov/Forms/Comments>.



## MEMBERSHIP

The following persons have applied for membership in the Riverside County Bar Association. If there are no objections, they will become members effective November 30, 2021.

**Matthew Gammariello** – Immigration Law Offices of Hadley Bajramovic, Riverside

**Jakub Madej** – Law Student, New York

**Adolfo Mediano** – Solo Practitioner, Banning

**Andrea A. Rathburn** – Office of the Public Defender, Riverside

**Alex E. Ruiz** – Holstrom Block & Parke, Corona

**Thomas E. Shinton** – Johnson & Shinton, Rancho Cucamonga

**Orquidea E. Wilcox** – Solo Practitioner, Corona

## 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 an RCBA member and can help, please contact Lisa at (951) 682-1015 or [lisa@riversidecountybar.com](mailto:lisa@riversidecountybar.com).

## LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE of the Riverside County Bar Association

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