

VOLUME 74 | NUMBER 10

# RIVERSIDE LAWYER

NOVEMBER  
2024

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# PRESIDENT'S Message

by Mark A. Easter



## An Unexpected Detour

On July 21 of this past summer, recently home from a two-week vacation to Europe, I checked into Riverside Community Hospital (RCH). Basically, I could not, for the life of me, fall asleep, and the pressure to my brain had become unbearable. It did not take the doctors long to figure out that the cause of my problem was a herniated diaphragm, which had caused my lower intestines to gravitate "up" to where my heart and lungs were located. My heart had been pushed to the other side of my chest, and my lungs were more or less being suffocated by my intestines. My doctors have since determined that the herniated diaphragm was a congenital defect from birth. How I was able to live an active life with that condition, for 60 years, remains a mystery.

After an unsuccessful surgery by doctors at RCH at the end of July, I was transferred to University of California, Irvine Medical Center (UCI Medical Center). On August 11, surgeons performed a 9-hour surgery in which they basically sorted out and placed my organs and intestines back where they belong. I have been in recovery ever since. I finally came out of the intensive care unit in mid-September, and since the end of September I have been at a rehabilitation hospital in Brea, where the focus is 1) ongoing treatment of the wound in my belly from the surgery; and 2) my physical therapy. So, I am now three-plus months in the hospital, but in the past few weeks the healing of my wound has progressed exponentially, and I hope to be home before Thanksgiving.

### A Few Things:

First, I was blessed to have a truly all-star, championship caliber team of doctors and staff taking care of me at UCI Medical Center. I was always certain that they were on top of things. As a litigator, I am so used to having an opposing counsel "opposing" or trying to achieve the opposite of what I am trying to achieve. It was

comforting realizing that there was no "opposing doctor" and that the entire team was after the same thing: the success of the surgery and my recovery. This inspired me to want to be an "all-star" patient—keeping a positive attitude, doing what they told me to do, no griping or complaining, etc. There were more than a few times when I was tested in that regard.

Second, I was blessed to have my daughter, EvanRae, with me along the way. In fact, she was working at RCH the night I first went into the hospital. She is a registered nurse, so she could speak for me to the doctors and explain things to me. She was helped by my sister Karen, who is also a nurse, and my nephew Tim, who is a physician's assistant.

Third, my firm at Best Best & Krieger has been incredibly supportive. Other attorneys and staff have stepped forward to manage and move my cases along. And the firm has made it clear to me that I was free to take as much time as necessary to heal and recover and figure out how to "re-enter the law practice" after a long absence. I really appreciate that support.

Fourth, the Bar Association has been very supportive. My colleagues on the board, especially President-Elect Megan Demshki, have stepped up and covered for me. The RCBA staff arranged to postpone the installation dinner to January. I am hoping to be able to return to fulfilling my responsibilities as your president by the end of the year.

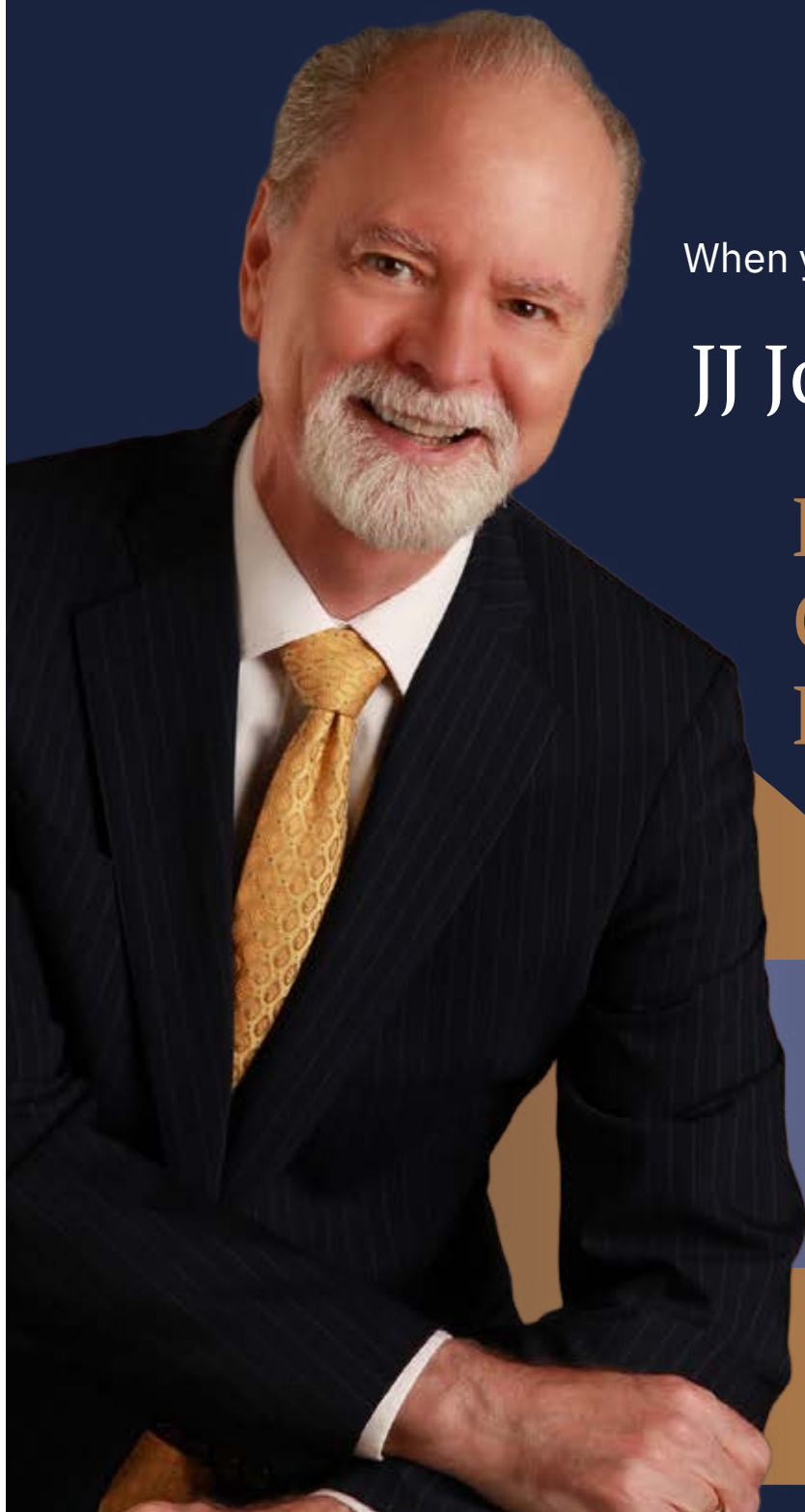
Unrelated to my medical detour, I did want to make one plug. Extremely near and dear to my heart is RCBA's Elves program, in which every December, we provide needy families in our county with presents, food, and gas cards, in the hopes of bringing some joy to their holiday season. This program's success depends on many volunteers—to be a shopping elf, wrapping elf, delivery elf, or money elf. The shopping, wrapping, and delivery parts are great ways to involve your families.

This year, the shopping will take place on December 9, the wrapping will occur on December 11 and 12, and the deliveries will occur from December 13 into the following week. If you are interested in participating, please contact the RCBA at 951-682-1015.

In conclusion, I look forward to completing my recovery, getting home, and seeing all of you again. In the meantime, have a great Thanksgiving!

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





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# BARRISTERS

## President's Message

by Summer M. DeVore



Thanksgiving has always been my favorite holiday. It is a special time to be with family and friends to simply enjoy each other's company and give thanks. It was also the one time each year that my grandma would make her sweet potatoes—my favorite dish of all time. I can't tell you how much I looked forward to it. The last Thanksgiving I spent with my grandma, she put me in charge of making sweet potatoes and I have continued on with her recipe every Thanksgiving since then. It has now become a dish that I always bring to share and that my son loves.

Thanksgiving is also the time for giving back. At an early age, my mom showed me the importance of helping others, especially those in need. When I was a child, I remember my mom telling me that while she was cleaning out the garage, she gave a toy piano I had to a woman passing-by. My mom explained to me that the woman could not afford a present for her child, so my mom gave her my piano so the woman's child would have something to open on Christmas morning. This story reminds me of the importance of RCBA's Elves Program.

If you have not participated in RCBA's Elves Program, I highly encourage you to get involved. For the last few years, I have had the privilege of volunteering with Barristers to wrap gifts for the families who participate in the program. This year will be no exception. I am happy to say that Barristers will be continuing with this tradition by wrapping gifts this December. I hope you will consider joining us! Personally, this is one event I look forward to each year.

Barristers is also finding other ways to give back. For example, Barristers is working with local organizations to provide networking, educational, and mentorship opportunities to college students interested in law school. Barristers will also be volunteering to be scoring judges for mock trial in February 2025. In addition, this year's Barristers Board is in the

process of planning a Riverside clean-up day for next year. But this is just the beginning. I hope to provide more opportunities to give back as we continue through this term.

### Join us at our upcoming events!

- Barristers "Happy Hour" Mixer: Friday, November 15, beginning at 5:00 p.m., at Heroes Restaurant located at 3397 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501.
- RCBA Elves Wrapping (followed by a social event): December 11, at the RCBA Building.
- Barristers "Happy Hour" Mixer: Friday, January 31, mark your calendars. Location and time to be determined.
- Scoring Attorneys for Mock Trial (followed by lunch): Saturday, February 8, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Robert Presley Hall of Justice. More details to follow soon.

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

### Stay up to date by following us!

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

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

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### Barristers Board Spotlight: John ("Jack") Rafter, 2024-2025 Member-at-Large

Jack is an attorney at Ongaro PC where his practice focuses on defending automobile manufacturers in warranty litigation. This is his second year on the Barristers Board. Jack is originally from Newtown, Connecticut, where he was a volunteer firefighter before moving to California to pursue his education and legal career. In his spare time, Jack enjoys outdoor activities and conspiring with his toddler.

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



# Paying It Forward

by Jordan Quach

The Riverside County Office of County Counsel was established in 1941 with three attorneys working out of the historic Riverside County courthouse. Today, it operates as a full-service law firm staffed by over 50 attorneys, each specializing in distinct areas of law. This breadth of expertise ensures that the office can provide comprehensive legal support across a wide range

of issues. The firm's primary clients include the Board of Supervisors, various County agencies and departments, as well as public commissions and officials. The Office of County Counsel's legal services are organized into four primary areas: child welfare, land use and real estate, public safety and litigation, and health and adult welfare.

While the core function of the office is to serve the legal needs of the county and its various arms of government, the commitment to public service extends beyond its legal duties. Every year, the Office of County Counsel participates in several community initiatives coordinated by the Riverside County Department of Mental Health and organized by Rochelle Mahosky, a paralegal at the Office of County Counsel. These efforts highlight the office's dedication to contributing to the well-being of the local community.

One of the key efforts is the holiday food drive, a campaign that focuses on providing local families with the resources needed to enjoy a traditional holiday meal. In preparation for Thanksgiving, County employees come together to collect and donate essential food items that form the basis of a festive dinner. This typically includes items such as potatoes, vegetables, stuffing, bread, and canned goods. Additionally, monetary donations are often pooled to provide families with vouchers they can use to purchase a turkey or ham. The campaign emphasizes not only providing a meal, but also fostering a sense of dignity and choice for the recipients. For the Office of County Counsel, this effort represents more than simply gathering donations—it is about recognizing the value of helping families create memorable holiday experiences, even in challenging times.

As the holiday season continues, the office shifts its focus to the Snowman Banner Campaign, a gift-giving initiative designed to bring joy to children whose families are facing hardships. This program is structured around anonymous wish lists written on paper snowflake cutouts



*26th Annual Fill-A-Backpack Drive*

submitted by children and their families, which are then added to a banner of other snowflakes. The lists often include requests for toys, clothing, and other essentials, but what makes this campaign special is the personal nature of the gifts. Rather than general donations, the program encourages employees to select a specific child's list and fulfill

their wishes directly. For some children, these may be the only gifts they receive during the holiday season, making the experience all the more meaningful. To preserve the element of surprise, gifts are delivered unwrapped, and the Department of Mental Health handles the distribution to ensure the presents reach the intended families in time for the holidays.

Being a publicly funded office, the Office of County Counsel staff contribute to these charitable programs as private individuals. The firm cannot allocate taxpayer resources toward these efforts, but the willingness of the attorneys and support staff to participate speaks volumes about the office's culture of service and its commitment to the community. The staff often describe these campaigns as some of the most rewarding experiences they participate in each year. For many, these efforts serve as a reminder of why they entered the legal profession—to make a difference in the lives of others. While much of their daily work involves complex legal issues and high-stakes cases, these community service efforts allow them to connect with individuals on a more personal level and see the immediate impact of their contributions. Involvement in these campaigns also reflects a broader principle that guides the work of the Office of County Counsel: the belief that public service goes beyond the courtroom or legal counsel. It extends into the community, where the people they serve live and work. For the attorneys and staff who participate, these efforts are not just a way to give back, but also a way to reinforce the values that underpin their work in the legal profession.

*Jordan Quach is a student intern at the Office of County Counsel and a fourth-year undergraduate student majoring in Public Policy at UCR.*



# Volunteering in Your Own Home: Fostering Dogs and Puppies

by Maria Riemer

2024's puppy season is (hopefully) coming to an end. Puppy season is the warm months when lots of puppies tend to be born. This puppy season, there were huge litters (some as large as fourteen puppies!) that were surrendered to the Riverside County Department of Animal Services or found dumped in fields. Currently, my husband and I are temporarily caring for three seven-week-old puppies, who are part of a litter of twelve and who arrived at the shelter without their mother at the age of three weeks old. The Department of Animal Services does not have the means to bottle feed puppies around the clock, so the puppies were at risk of being euthanized if not placed into foster care. Thankfully, five fosters volunteered. The litter was split among the fosters so everyone took home two or three puppies to care for until they are eight weeks old – the youngest age a puppy can legally be adopted in California.

Fostering puppies brings joy in so many ways: the overwhelming cuteness, watching their incredibly fast growth, learning tips and tricks from other foster parents, meeting people who want the best for animals in our community, watching our resident dog take care of the puppies as if they were his own, and, of course, saving lives—particularly in Riverside County where there is a high rate of euthanasia due to overcrowding at the shelter.

If you're intrigued by fostering, but puppy energy isn't your idea of a good time, don't fret – adult dogs can be fostered too! Adult dogs become stressed in the kennel environment and need to take breaks from it, which is where fostering comes in, or they have medical needs that will resolve



Foster Puppies

much quicker in a home than in the shelter.

One of the joys of bringing a new foster dog home from the shelter is figuring out the dog's personality outside of the shelter. Sometimes the dogs are thrilled to be out of the shelter and demonstrate their excitement by zooming around the backyard – running here and there with abandon because they had been confined to a small kennel for too long. Other times, the dogs are exhausted from the shelter environment, are relieved to have a quiet place to rest their head, and sleep so peacefully. When the dogs get their energy out or catch up on their sleep, their relief to be out of the noisy shelter is evident. They cuddle, they play, and they look at you with eyes filled with appreciation for giving them a temporary home while they wait for their adoptive family to discover them.

When you foster an adult dog, you save two lives – the life of the dog you're fostering, and the life of a dog who remains at the shelter, but who now has more time to find an adopter because of the space you created

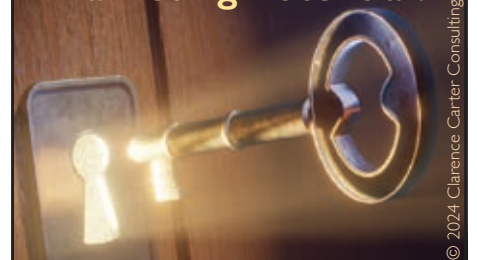
at the shelter. Fostering dogs and puppies is an amazing way to help the community from the comfort of your own home. If you are interested in fostering, there are organizations throughout Riverside County from Mary S. Roberts Pet Adoption Center in Riverside to Animal Samaritans in Thousand Palms to Animal Friends of the Valleys in Wildomar, with more organizations in between.

If you are interested in fostering with the Mary S. Roberts Pet Adoption Center please contact them at [fostercare@petsadoption.org](mailto:fostercare@petsadoption.org).

*When not playing with foster puppies, Maria works at the Fourth District, Division Two, Court of Appeal in Riverside.*



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# My Journey as a Project Graduate Educational Representative

by Malvina Ovanezova

"Every kid is one caring adult away from being a success story." ~ Josh Shipp

What is the meaning of a high school diploma? To many of us, a high school diploma is just one step closer (of many) to the practice of law. Growing up, both my parents worked and while they both went to college and had degrees, they did not know what the path looked like in the United States. I was left to try to figure things out on my own. I had a goal of becoming an attorney, but had no real guidance. I was lost and often took the long road in obtaining my degree.

When I first heard about Project Graduate, I was participating in a continuing education program through the UCR extension center. The Honorable Jacqueline Jackson mentioned the program and I developed an interest in providing foster youth assistance to graduate from high school. I wanted to help others who did not have the guidance or support system in advancing their educational experience. I sought more information about the program from Riverside County Bar Association and then-chair, Brian Unitt.

Approximately ten years ago, I became an educational representative with Project Graduate. My first appearance at Educational Calendar with my assigned foster student was before the Honorable Matthew Perantoni, who was instrumental in creating the program with then-Presiding Judge Sherill Ellsworth, when he was a Commissioner of the Riverside Superior Court.

Throughout the years, I have been assigned the educational rights of at least one foster youth in each program year. Due to the number of students wanting to participate in the program, I am sometimes assigned two students in one program year. Some students completed the program, but some students went on their own path of self-discovery. While my experience growing up was different than theirs, we had something in common: finding out what we are going to do with our lives once we graduated high school.

Although Project Graduate provides incentives to help kids graduate high school through the generosity of donors, that is not the end-all of the program. The goal of the program is to help guide kids in figuring out what they want to do with their lives once they have finished high school. Often, most of the students are behind in school and have been in multiple placements during their lives. Multiple placements usually means that they have been moved around to multiple schools and have not been able to find a connection to their school or other students.

Can you imagine going to four different schools in your junior year of high school? How can a teenager obtain any real substance from what they have learned with so many changes in their lives? As an educational rights representa-



*Neveah Hall, a successful participant in Project Graduate, whose educational rights were upheld by Malvina Ovanezova*

*Photo courtesy of Department of Public Social Services – Children's Services Division*

tive, we are often their only constant in their lives. These multiple changes throughout high school make it very difficult for our foster students to stay on track. But my goal for my students has been to just stay focused on the goal of graduating and reminding my students that this is only one step toward their own future.

The judicial officers, the court staff, county counsel, the social workers, DPSS support staff, and the other educational rights representatives work together as a team to help foster youth reach the goal of obtaining that high school diploma, no matter what life throws at them. When I have not been able to attend a meeting,

other educational rights representatives have stepped in and helped my students and I do the same for them.

On a monthly basis, we meet with our students during the lunch hour and go over their goals, barriers, and how close they are to completing the task of obtaining their diploma. Project Graduate also provides lunch during the hour preceding the Educational Calendar, which is when we meet with our judicial officer to go over the past month's high school activities. We also have speakers present to talk to the foster students about different paths they can take after they graduate from high school.

We also meet with our students outside of the Educational Calendar, at least once a month. We obtain progress reports from the student's school and counselor, so we have supporting documentation for the forms we complete monthly. These forms and supporting documents are needed to justify the award of points. These points ultimately translate into dollars on a 1:1 basis that will be provided in the form of a check once the students complete the program and graduate from high school.

Beginning at 1:30 p.m., each student and educational representative meet with Honorable Mona Nemat for Educational Calendar. We go over the completed forms and documentation, discuss what is happening with each student in school and if there are any tools that will help them in reaching their goal. It can be as simple as a backpack, or equipment for a bike, or even a bus pass. This is where we see the communication and teamwork involved in making sure the student graduates from high school. There are representatives from each entity involved, to communicate with the assigned social worker and/or to communicate with the appointed minor's attorney to help them reach this goal. The students talk about their monthly successes or barriers and what will help them for the following month.

The best part of being an educational representative is seeing the students accomplish their goal and earn their diploma. At the annual graduation luncheon, they obtain a certificate from the program, a laptop and money from the



points they have earned while in the program to help start them off on the right path to their next step. Most of the time the graduation luncheon involves the graduating students, their social worker, the educational rights representatives, and their support, which can be their caregivers or family. The other students from the program also come to support the students who have graduated. By the end of the school year, the kids know each other, some are friends from before the program, some become friends after becoming involved in the program. Throughout it all, the educational representatives are there to support them and cheer them onto success.

Throughout my years as a Project Graduate educational representative, I have seen so many struggling foster students thrive in the program and graduate high school. Some

students have continued their education with local community colleges while others have moved out-of-state to attend a 4-year university. I am proud of all our students.

If you are interested in making a difference in a foster student's life by becoming an educational representative with Project Graduate, please contact the chair of our program, Alexandra Fong, at [RCBF.ProjectGraduate@gmail.com](mailto:RCBF.ProjectGraduate@gmail.com).

*Malvina Ovanezova is a solo practitioner, specializing in family law, a board member with the Riverside County Bar Association and the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court, and a member of the Project Graduate Steering Committee and educational representative.*



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# Giving Back

by Sheela Stark

Have you ever pondered your purpose in life? It's a question that resonates with us all. For those of faith, the answer often lies in glorifying God through our actions. Yet, even for those who are not believers, the search for personal meaning remains significant. At some point, we all wrestle with this profound inquiry. I found one of my purposes observing Judge Tara Reilly's courtroom at the Historic San Bernardino Courthouse twelve years ago. But my journey began much earlier.

For fifteen years, I worked full-time as a therapist for special needs children while attending law school at night. The years spent wearing costumes, creating characters, and engaging in playful activities didn't quite prepare me for the rigors of law school or for the challenges of being a lawyer. However, the day after my swearing-in, my first client, my brother Shaw, urgently needed my help.

Shaw is my 30-year-old brother with severe disabilities, and as he turned 18, we faced complications in securing his care, necessitating a conservatorship. Armed with a business card that read "bar number pending," I purchased a conservatorship packet from the Rancho Cucamonga courthouse and embarked on the daunting task of completing the documents. It took me over 40 hours to navigate the probate codes and understand each checkbox. I even compiled a vocabulary list of unfamiliar terms—there were many.

After submitting the completed packet, I braced myself for the inevitable scrutiny of the probate clerk's red pen, which made my days feel like an uphill battle. After a few attempts, I finally secured a court hearing date. Excitement soon morphed into panic as I realized I had no idea how to introduce myself in court, where to sit, or what to say. To prepare, I decided to spend several weeks observing the courtroom, hoping to learn how to navigate this new world.

It was during these observations that I met Judge Reilly. The moment I stepped into her courtroom, I felt a wave of nausea, likely from a mix of nerves and my pregnant belly. I barely made it through the morning calendar before Judge Reilly noticed me and asked to speak with me. As I held my breakfast down, I answered her questions nervously. To my surprise, her kind words put me at ease, and our conversations throughout my observations made my introduction to the legal profession a warm one.

As I watched families navigate their conservatorships, I witnessed their struggles firsthand. Judge Reilly did her best to direct them to hire attorneys or seek help from Legal Aid, but their refrain was all too familiar: "I make too much for Legal Aid, but not enough to hire a lawyer."

One particularly chilly day, a mother brought in her son with cerebral palsy, much like my brother. She faced her

own conservatorship challenges, but had already received assistance from Legal Aid. Unfortunately, their help was limited to initial paperwork, leaving her without guidance for the subsequent steps. They also did not represent clients in court, which meant families were often left to fend for themselves. Perhaps the sight of her son's blanket wrapped around his knees triggered memories of my brother and urged me to follow them out of the courtroom.

When I found her in the crowded hallway, she was already in tears, utterly overwhelmed. I couldn't imagine the difficulties she faced; it had taken me so long to navigate the process myself. That moment marked the beginning of my Giving Back Program, solidifying my purpose: to assist individuals with limited resources.

Over the past twelve years, I've always maintained at least one pro bono client, with that crying mother being my first. God willing, I will continue this work for as long as I can.

The ABA Model Rule 6.1 encourages lawyers to provide 50 hours of pro bono services each year. I do not track my hours; I simply go where I'm needed or where I am called. Whether I assist on specific cases or volunteer with community organizations, I don't seek accolades or gratitude—though they often come my way. Instead, I do it because when something matters deeply to you, it transforms into both a purpose and a guiding philosophy.

Helping others through my Giving Back Program—whether through legal services, education, or resources—keeps me grounded. It serves as a reminder of the confusion and challenges I faced as a new attorney and underscores the greater struggles many members of the public endure. "Pro bono" is a Latin term meaning "for the public good," but I believe it also enriches our own lives. On tough days, nothing lifts your spirits like helping someone else. Your single act of kindness can leave a lasting impact on another person and their family.

As lawyers, we possess a unique and hard-won knowledge that enables us to be advocates in the courtroom and in our communities. Our power lies in protecting and empowering others through our words. I encourage you to seek ways to give back for the public good; you may just discover your own purpose along the way.

*Sheela Stark is the principal attorney of Sheela Stark Law Group, APC, and the Program Chair of the Honorable Joseph B. Campbell Inn of Court, the local chapter of the American Inn of Court, a nationwide organization of judges and lawyers, founded and dedicated to promoting the highest levels of professionalism in the practice of law.*







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# On Giving Back: William F. Buckley, Jr.'s *Gratitude: Reflections on What We Owe to Our Country*

by Abram S. Feuerstein

Depending on which lawn sign I display, I might not be able to borrow a cup of flour from my neighbor. But depending on his lawn sign, I might not lend him one, either.

And, while I am at it, did you see that guy jumping up and down at the rally in Pennsylvania. I will never buy a car from him. As to that actress, I know it's been a while, but after she posed with those North Vietnamese soldiers, I have never been and will not go to one of her films. And please don't get me started about the policies of that coffee shop chain. Yet, people do love those cars, she is a really good actress, and I can use a cup of coffee.

So, kidding aside, what to make of the country's deep political divisions and the way we are all behaving towards each other. Has this type of polarization always characterized the American political landscape, or is this new and, if so, can anything be done about it? Benjamin Franklin purportedly quipped at the time of the Revolution "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately,"<sup>1</sup> a witticism about the need for unity in the fight for independence when maybe a third of the public supported the cause.<sup>2</sup> Do we really need a nation defining event for people to come together, or just some good manners and a strong dosage of the good old golden rule?

Approximately 35 years ago, William F. Buckley, Jr., a dean/founder of the modern American conservative political movement, magazine editor (*National Review*), spy-thriller novelist (CIA Agent Blackford Oakes), T.V. personality (PBS's *Firing Line*), avid sailor (his boat was named "Patito" or "duckling" in Spanish) and *bon vivant*, published a small volume entitled: *Gratitude: Reflections on What We Owe to Our Country*.<sup>3</sup> By word-smith Buckley's standards, it was not much of a book at



William F. Buckley, Jr.

a wide-margined 169 pages, resembling more an elongated public policy essay. It also lacked some of Buckley's characteristic wit and biting humor that even his political opponents envied.

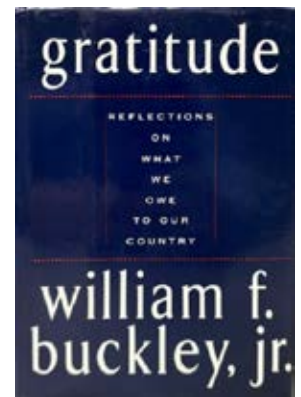
Notwithstanding any of the book's shortcomings, Buckley focused attention on an important if not grand idea – that a system of national service for 18 or-so-year olds could energize American civic life, dissolve economic and social barriers, and create a sense of shared purpose that would help define the duties of citizenship in a republic.

Written in 1990 at a time when it had been a couple of decades since an American had been drafted and when the fall of the Soviet Union diminished the need for "soldiers in the field," Buckley identified various extra-military pursuits worthy of a national service plan: helping older people such as Alzheimer patients, child care, assisting teachers, advancing environmental goals, or even forestalling the deterioration of books in libraries.<sup>4</sup>

"What (I) have in mind is a program that seeks to meet needs undefined, or ill-defined, by the market, while inculcating a prime sense of citizenship among participants," Buckley wrote.<sup>5</sup>

For Buckley, a national service program was less for the benefit of the recipients of the services and more for the benefit and ennobling of the people engaged in providing the services.<sup>6</sup> After all, he observed, "(t)he redemption of Scrooge was more important, in *A Christmas Carol*, than the stuffed goose or even Bob Cratchit's surprise."<sup>7</sup>

Whether a national service program should be compulsory (is it "hostile to a free society?"),<sup>8</sup> could a voluntary program succeed, the types of inducements or penalties that government might impose to implement a service program, constitutional issues, and



Gratitude Book Cover

1 For some time there has been a dispute as to whether Franklin actually made the statement. See <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-22-02-0284>, referencing Carl Van Doren, *Benjamin Franklin's Autobiographical Writings* (New York, 1945), pp. 418–19.

2 This estimate is a vague recollection by the author from elementary school history classes and appears based on an observation from John Adams. See "Loyalists in American Revolution," retrieved October 21, 2024, at [https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/loyalists-in-american-revolution.htm#:~:text=John%20Adams%20wrote%20that%20approximately,supported%20neither%20side%20\(neutral\)](https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/loyalists-in-american-revolution.htm#:~:text=John%20Adams%20wrote%20that%20approximately,supported%20neither%20side%20(neutral).). By reviewing contemporaneous pamphlets, newspapers, and correspondence, modern scholarship likely has refined this number.

3 W.F. Buckley, Jr., *Gratitude: Reflections on What we Owe to our Country* (Random House 1990) ("*Gratitude*").

4 *Gratitude*, pp. xvii–xviii; pp. 95–96.

5 *Gratitude*, p. 20.

6 *Gratitude*, p. 38.

7 *Gratitude*, p. 47.

8 *Gratitude*, p. 50.



the need to prevent a service program from being transformed into another failed poverty effort managed by a large federal bureaucracy are all topics on Buckley's table. He spends some ink, too, discussing the Citizenship and National Service Bill, introduced in 1989 by former Georgia Senator Sam Nunn, which proposed paying participants \$10,000 – or about \$25,000 in today's dollars – towards college tuition or a downpayment on a house purchase.<sup>9</sup>

Aside from the life skills and strong bonds forged by shared service experiences, Buckley's rationale for writing *Gratitude* was to explore what it means to be a citizen in a republic and the duty an individual owes to his community beyond, say, recycling plastic bottles, purchasing and displaying a flag, or even paying taxes. This is

9 *Gratitude*, pp. xviii-xix. Nunn served in the Senate for approximately 25 years from 1972-1997.

a big concept – one of the biggest – and likely requires a more comprehensive treatment than the one Buckley gives it in *Gratitude*.

But, bridging deeply entrenched partisan differences based on competing worldviews likely starts with the recognition of a central fact – that most of life's battles are determined by luck and mostly the luck of having been born in the right place, such as the United States. To use Buckley's words, an acknowledgment of that patrimony through a year of national service may very well help young Americans "grow into citizenship," "stimulate (a new) civic ethos," and awaken the "sleeping angels in one's own nature."<sup>10</sup>

Abram S. Feuerstein is employed as a government lawyer. The views, if any, expressed herein are solely those of the author.



10 See *Gratitude*, pp. xiv, 26 and 40.

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# My Passion: Raising Service Dog Puppies

by Michael Geller

Around 2005, my then wife told me that since I was pretty good at training my own dogs, maybe I should consider raising service dog puppies. She had seen some dogs in stores with vests from Canine Support Teams in Menifee.

I filled out an application, sent it in and in a few days, I heard from their puppy raising manager. She knew us from times gone by. She said she had been to our house and it was fine for raising a puppy. They had a few puppies coming in at the end of the week and she asked if I wanted to get one. I told my pet Golden Retriever DeNovo that things would not be the same around there ever again. And boy, was that prophetic statement accurate.

Chief came to our house at around 3 months old. We worked with him and turned him in when he was about 18 months old. His final training was done at Chino Woman's Prison under a special program and in 2007, he was placed with a disabled woman with a degenerative disease.

I raised a few more puppies with Canine Support Teams, and for reasons not important here, started raising for what was then called Canine Companions for Independence. They recently changed their name and are now called Canine Companions ([canine.org](http://canine.org)). I have been raising puppies for them ever since.

I turned in Puppy 15, aka Guinan, about 9 months ago, and he was just placed with an elementary school psychologist to work with special needs students. Puppy 13, aka Marcel, was placed with a young Autistic boy. His parents told us that until the dog, he would not sleep in his own room by himself. Marcel has helped him normalize his life.

Canine Companions is the largest service dog provider in the United States. They currently raise about 900 puppies a year from their headquarters in Santa Rosa, the home of Snoopy. All their dogs are either Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, or a mix of Labrador and Golden that they call Lab-Golden Cross.

The most common question I get is "How do you give up the puppies you raise?" And the answer is "How could I not?" If they make it through the program, they can change someone's life for a long time. And for me, it would be another dog sitting on the couch all day.

And yes, they never forget us as we never forget them. We have had some reunions after years apart. But like our children, we want them to find their own way. And they do.

Canine Companions carefully breed their own dogs. The pregnant mothers are given to volunteer families to care for through birth and weaning of the puppies. The puppies are returned to Santa Rosa at around eight weeks old, and are put on airplanes and sent all over the United States to people like me, called Puppy Raisers.

We get an eight-week-old puppy, and in the next fourteen to eighteen months, turn them from puppies that can barely walk, to well-adjusted, well-trained dogs that can thrive in the human world. We take them to formal training classes and when ready, take them out in public to get them truly used to

the human world and a trip to Costco, like a final exam. Any puppy that can go through Costco can probably go through anything.

My pups start going to work with me from the day they come home. I have a crate in the office. My office staff helps by taking them out when needed, feeding, and other care. I start training them immediately. When they have all their shots, they can go out and I start taking them to formal training along with what I do. We are to teach them about twenty-five non-working commands. Sit, stay, stand, get into the car, get out of the car, go through the metal detector (well, "out"), shake, roll over and on and on.

When ready, they go to court with me, hence going through the metal detectors ahead of me. I have had pups suffer through jury trials, trips to the Court of Appeal, and everything in between. Restaurants, stores, public meetings, parties, celebrations, libraries, plays, concerts, and movies. And no, they do not eat at the table, nor do they get fed in a restaurant.

As part of our contribution, we pay for all their food, shots, veterinary care, toys, and all other such things that puppies need.

It is fine to have pets at home, which I call the "permanent collection." Canine Companions' only rule is that no dogs under one year old in the home. Canine Companions has several regional offices across the country. Our "home base" is Oceanside, where they train all the puppies turned-in 4 times a year and work with the recipients of the newly trained dogs.

When we turn them in, they spend the first month going through extensive medical exams (eyes, hips, shoulders, heart). Then they start advanced training to teach them how to actually do their job with the professional staff of Canine Companions trained instructors.

The raisers have the first right of refusal to adopt their puppy if they don't make it through the program. After that, they have a huge waiting list for either retired or disqualified puppies. None of their dogs will ever be abandoned or end up in a shelter. From birth to death, Canine Companions takes responsibility for their puppies.

Anyone interested in the program or becoming a puppy raiser can go to their website, [canine.org](http://canine.org). Netflix is now showing a documentary called "Inside the Mind of a Dog" where Canine Companions is featured prominently.

I am currently raising puppy number 16, aka Vance VII. He is set to be turned-in in February 2025. Vance VII pretty much goes everywhere with me now.

*Michael Geller has practiced law in the community since 1995. He works all kinds of litigation cases, but specializes in Automobile Dealer law, warranty law, and consumer law, and occasionally, service dog access rights.*





# Project Graduate Helps Foster Youth Complete High School and Achieve Their Goals

## Over 50 At-Risk Students Defy the Odds through a Special Mentorship Program Established in 2011

Monique, 18, fought back tears as she proudly received her diploma from Citrus Valley High School in Redlands last June. After navigating multiple foster homes and personal loss, her graduation was more than just a milestone—it was a testament to her resilience. “I cried tears of joy because, in that moment, I felt pure happiness,” Monique shared.

She credits much of her success to Project Graduate, a unique mentorship program introduced to her by her social worker, Elizabeth Estrada. This initiative, launched in 2011, is a collaborative effort between the Riverside County Bar Association, the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), and the Riverside Juvenile Court. Its mission is simple but powerful: to help foster youth graduate high school by pairing them with dedicated volunteer mentors.

During the 2022-23 school year, 61.2% of California's foster youth graduated from high school, compared to 86.5% of the general student population, according to the California Department of Education. In contrast, Riverside County achieved a 71% foster youth graduation rate, one of the highest for a region of its size.

Since its founding, Project Graduate has guided over 50 foster youth to complete high school, offering personalized mentorship that not only supports academic achievement but also helps students plan for their futures.

Monique was one of 120 foster youth recognized countywide this year and celebrated at several events, including the Project Graduate Luncheon on June 27. Hosted by DPSS, the Riverside County Bar Association,



Monique (center), 18, celebrates her high school graduation at the Project Graduate luncheon held at the Riverside County Bar Association building in Riverside on June 27, 2024, accompanied by social worker Elizabeth Estrada (left) and mentor Mary Reyna (right), an attorney from Hemet.

and the Juvenile Defense Panel, Monique was honored alongside two other graduates and a program alumnus.

Social worker Elizabeth Estrada praised the program's collaborative approach, saying, “Consistency across our partnerships is everything. When you sit next to someone you care about, that's when they truly rise to the occasion and accomplish what they once thought was impossible.”

Project Graduate youth have also benefited from the ongoing support of key partners, including the Riverside County Office of Education, Court Appointed Special Advocates, and faith-based organizations. These partnerships play an integral role in providing foster youth with the stability and encouragement they need to succeed.

At the luncheon, Bridgette Hernandez, assistant director of Children's Services at DPSS, congratulated Monique and her fellow graduates, saying, “We are immensely proud of you. Your dedication and resilience have brought you to this incredible moment. As you move forward, remember that the sky's the limit.”

Monique's educational representative, attorney Mary Reyna from Hemet, expressed deep pride in Monique's achievements and the bond they formed over time. “Watching her grow wings and soar has been an extraordinary experience,” Reyna said.

Inspired by the care and support she received from Project Graduate, Monique is now pursuing her passion for music and psychology at Riverside City College. “I'm very grateful,” Monique said. “Without Project Graduate, I don't even know where I'd be right now.”

To learn more about Monique's inspiring journey, visit [bit.ly/ProjectGraduateMonique](http://bit.ly/ProjectGraduateMonique).

For more information about Project Graduate, call 951-682-1015 or visit [riversidecountybar.com/foundation/project-graduate](http://riversidecountybar.com/foundation/project-graduate).

### How to Get Involved

Members of the Riverside County Bar Association are encouraged to join Project Graduate. Becoming an educational representative involves a background check, fingerprinting, a brief training session, and appointment by a judicial officer overseeing the program.

If you cannot serve as a mentor or educational representative, there are plenty of other ways to help. Opportunities include serving on the steering committee, organizing career days, supporting volunteer recruitment and training, raising funds for the student incentive program, and more.

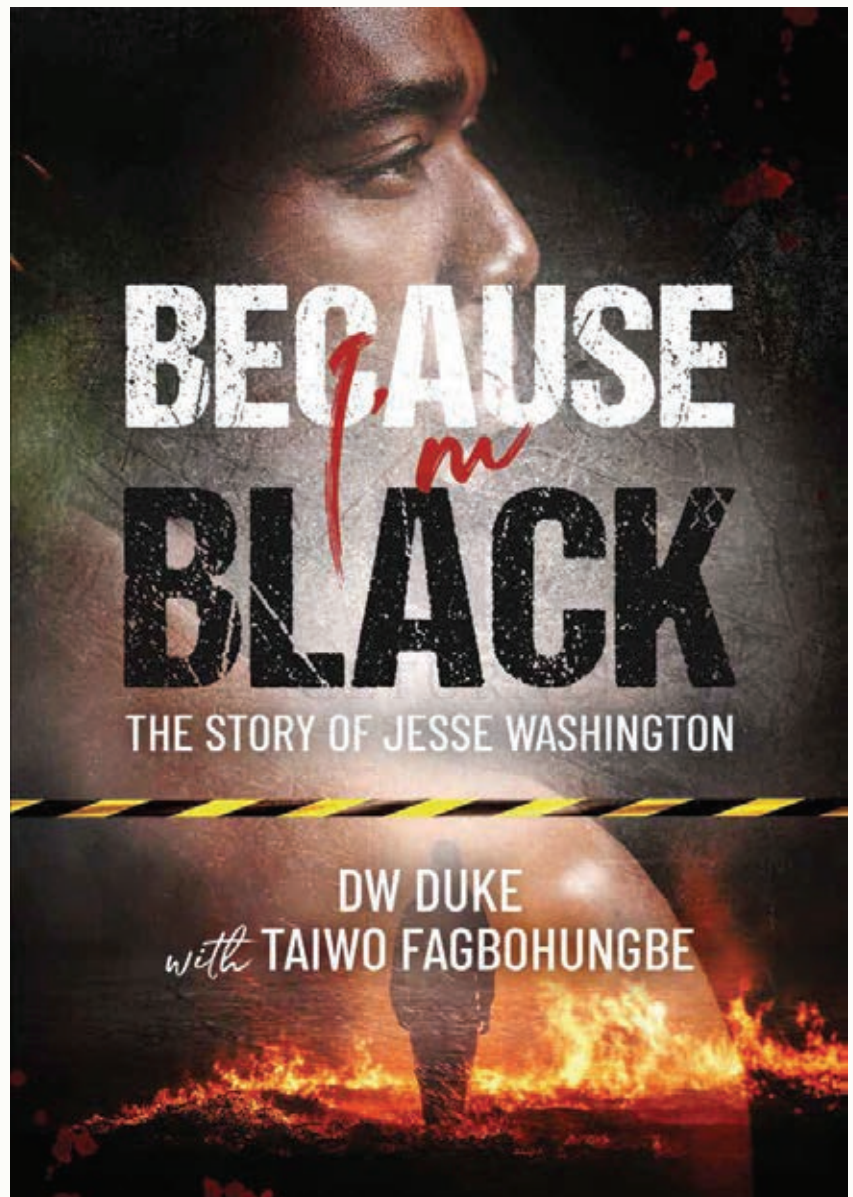


**L**iving at a time in American history when public facilities were segregated and Black persons were denied equal rights under the law, seventeen-year-old Jesse Washington found himself accused of murdering Lucy Fryer, the wife of the owner of the farm where he worked as a sharecropper. Without the benefit of proper legal representation, he was rushed to trial under the presumption of guilt, with no meaningful opportunity to prepare a defense.

Who was Jesse Washington and how did he come to suffer such a fate? Was he guilty of the crime of which he was accused? Many said no but few spoke in his defense except Samuel Palmer Brooks, the President of Baylor University, who quickly mounted a campaign to ensure that Jesse received a fair trial. But was that enough or were the efforts of Brooks in vain?

Inspired by a true story, this biographical novel examines the evidence surrounding the 1916 trial of Jesse Washington and the circumstances under which he was accused.

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#### About the Authors



**D.W. Duke** is an experienced California trial attorney who earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan and a Juris Doctor from Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, Missouri. DW is active in civil and human rights and has worked extensively in the area of race relations. He holds a fifth-degree black belt conferred by World Tae Kwon Do in Seoul, Korea, and is the author of eight books.



**Taiwo Fagbohunge**, a native of the ancient city of Owo in Ondo State, Nigeria, is a distinguished writer with a passion for literature and international relations. A member of the Yoruba Tribe in Nigeria, Taiwo holds a Bachelor of Arts in English Studies from Adekunle Ajasin University and a Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) in Politics and International Relations from Lead City University. Taiwo is currently completing a Master of Arts in English Studies at Arizona State University in the United States. Taiwo's research and studies focus on the African Slave Trade and the Black experience in American history. With roots in Nigeria and a global perspective shaped by his international studies, Taiwo brings a unique voice and rich cultural background to the world of literature.





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For many college students, buying business attire is not an option. The R'Professional Career Closet is the perfect solution to this dilemma. Each quarter, any UCR student can choose up to 3 pieces of clothing to create or help finish off an outfit... for free! During the 2023-2024 academic school year, 1,502 items were given to 1,241 students. Clothing donations come primarily from the UCR faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners. Community businesses are invited to hold clothing drives to bring in donations.

This year, the Riverside County Bar Association is invited to participate in a donation drive for the R'Professional Career Closet during the month of November. Donations should be clean, free of tears and stains, ready to wear, good to excellent quality, purchased within the last five years and/or current with fashion, and appropriate for an interview. Ideal donations would include: Two-piece suits, jackets and blazers, blouses and dress shirts, dress pants and skirts, and business dresses. All sizes

are welcome, but small and medium sizes are a high need. Men's pants, suits, and jackets also are in high demand.

Donation boxes will be provided at the Riverside County Bar Association building during business hours to collect donated items. In addition, this year we have compiled an Amazon wish list for those who would like to purchase items instead.

We appreciate your commitment and contribution to the success of UCR students. To learn more about the R'Professional Career Closet, visit us at: <https://careers.ucr.edu/rprofessional-career-closet>.



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# The RCBA 2024 Elves Program – Season XXIII

by Brian C. Percy

Last year was a record year for the Elves program, as the number of families served has now exceeded one hundred. The number of families served grew by more than 30% from the past year when it jumped from 74 to 113. The number of individuals served grew from 385 to 450. While one could opine that this growth in service is a sad reflection on our local economy, I prefer to see it as a testament to our membership's growing capacity to help and serve. This will be our 23rd opportunity to show the local community that supports us, that we care and do give back.

As I write this in October, I have no sense of the numbers yet, or whether the number of needy families will grow or drop back below a hundred. Regardless, your RCBA will be there to 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. Because of the growth, we will implement a few changes that we hope will make things easier for everyone. Look for a more in depth discussion below.

So, once again, 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?

**Shopping Elves:** As a Shopping Elf, you will receive a Christmas "wish list" from your adopted 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 at our "check in" table located in the garden center. This is a real opportunity to test or show off your "value" shopping skills. Many of our Shopping Elves have 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.

*There is a change in location and start time this year for shoppers: To better accommodate our growth, we are switching our location to a different **Walmart Supercenter at 1800 N Perris Blvd., in Perris**. This location is only seven miles away but they are poised to make the shopping/checkout process much easier for us. This year we will shop on **Monday, December 9, 2024 starting at 2:00 p.m., with the goal of being finished by 7:30pm**. (This earlier starting time will give you a larger window to shop and allow us to hopefully end the day for RCBA staff a little earlier.)*

We are also putting in a new more efficient process for checking out and bagging for the individual families.

This year, to avoid gift "mixups" you will be provided not only with a shopping list, with stickers, but individual bags for every family member so their items can be put in separate recipient bags as they shop. We will ask every Shopping Elf to process their shopping carts through the checkout queue to ensure the correct gifts stay in the correct recipient bag. This new process may add a little time to your shopping day but will make the checkout faster and our preparation for the wrapping process flow much smoother. Please be sure to allow a little more time in your schedule while we go through this new process.

**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. **This year the wrapping nights at the RCBA's boardroom will occur on Wednesday, December 11 and Thursday, December 12, starting at 3:30pm on each day.**

We had a tremendous turnout for "in person" wrapping at the Bar last year, with music, food and camaraderie. A good time was had by all. However, some people, especially those who wrap and deliver, like the experience of picking up, wrapping and delivery all in one trip. So we will continue to offer this Hybrid version too.





Once again, we will also ask those **Wrapping Elves** who are wrapping off-site to come to the RCBA on December 11 and 12 to pick up your bag with gifts and wrapping supplies. You will then have 2 days to wrap and/or to take the gifts back to wrap at your home or office (fun for the whole fam-

ily or staff!) and **return the gifts to the RCBA offices by no later than noon on December 13** 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. You can make arrangements by contacting my office at 951-686-1584 and letting Lucy know about the families (and family number) you are planning to deliver with the date and times that work within your schedule (on or before December 23).

To help us plan, I would like all Wrapping Elves to contact the RCBA and Lucy Velez-Garcia at lvelez-garcia@bpearcyllaw.com by **no later than December 4th to identify themselves and their email address**. Remember, excellent wrapping and organizational skills are welcomed, *but are not required*.

**Delivery Elves:** Over the years, many members have expressed that delivering gifts to the families was by far one of the most heart-warming Elf experiences. So, 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! It is also a good opportunity to teach your young ones early the rewarding feeling we get of helping those less fortunate than themselves. When signing up, please contact Lucy Velez-Garcia at lvelez-garcia@bpearcyllaw.com, (951-686-1584), to let us know how many families you can deliver to.

Depending on the total number of families adopted, Delivery Elves will be able to personally deliver the wrapped gifts to each of our families from **December 13 to 23**. (You'll need to retrieve all gifts/bags from the RCBA offices by no later than December 23). Please contact the RCBA office at 951-682-1015 before you come to pick up your bags to ensure that your family(ies) gifts and bags are ready for delivery.

**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, 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. Because of the larger number of families last year, we are not starting off with a carry over cushion from the prior year. That means we have to raise more money this year to get back on track. Please give generously and ask your friends and colleagues to do the same. The more money we raise and the earlier we raise it means a greater number of families we can assist.

**You can really help us by sending in your donation EARLY** since it allows us to determine our budget for the number of families we help. The majority of funds need to be donated no later than December 8, 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 it will be saved to get us a head start 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 or you can deliver them as well. We thank you in advance for your holiday generosity.

To become a Shopping, Wrapping, Delivery, or Money Elf (or a combination of these), please email your name and desired Elf designation(s) to one of the following: Charlene Nelson (charlene@riversidecountybar.com) or Lisa Yang (lisa@riversidecountybar.com) (they are at 951-682-1015), Brian Percy (bpearcy@bpearcyllaw.com), or Mr. Percy's assistants, Anna Gherity (agherity@bpearcyllaw.com) and Lucy Velez-Garcia (lvelez-garcia@bpearcyllaw.com). You can also reach Lucy 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 chairperson (i.e. "Head Elf") of the Elves Program*





# Opposing Counsel: George Roscoe “Ross” Trindle III

by Melissa Cushman

George Roscoe Trindle III, “Ross” to everyone, but the government, is currently the assistant county counsel at the County of Riverside and is in his twenty-first year of practicing public agency law. Unlike many lawyers, the fast-talker and rapid-fire joke teller knew he wanted to be a lawyer early on, ever since his high school days in Upland, California. Inspired by great government and history teachers in high school, he was also on the varsity mock trial from his freshman to senior year, playing an attorney part all four seasons, which further cemented his interest in law school and a legal career.



George Roscoe “Ross” Trindle III

Born in Honolulu to military parents, Ross moved around the state and the country, from Orange County, to Baltimore and the D.C. area, before finally settling in Upland. He attended the University of California, Santa Barbara, majoring in law and society with an emphasis in criminal justice. There, he was the chair of the Judicial Council for Associated Students (the “supreme court” for student government), and even drafted their judicial council manual that is still in use today (after being revised by his brother, who attended a decade later and filled the same office). The law and society major was interdisciplinary and combined introductory legal studies with psychology, statistics, social sciences, and philosophy, investigating how those intersected with the American legal system. With that background, he began his legal career by attending the Santa Clara University School of Law, which included a summer of living and studying abroad in Singapore, where he worked for Rajah & Tann, then the largest high tech law firm in Southeast Asia.

Ross pursued a specialty in high technology law, even obtaining a certificate in it. He worked as a research assistant for the Broadband Institute, a think tank at Santa Clara, researching the deployment of broadband internet and the development of policies to address the growing “digital divide,” between rural and urban/suburban communities. Ross also worked for Sony Computer Entertainment America (now Sony Interactive Entertainment), the subsidiary responsible for the PlayStation gaming console, as a law clerk. Despite his continued interest in the area, the bursting of the high-tech bubble in the early 2000s, and resulting flood of the market with experienced tech attorneys looking for work, induced him to explore other legal specialties.

After graduating and passing the bar in 2003, he first worked for a public agency litigation defense firm, then ran into Dean Derleth of Best Best & Krieger LLP, which was

then expanding its Los Angeles office. He worked at BBK until 2014, then went to Jones & Mayer Law, then to Aleshire & Wynder, LLP, finally landing at the Riverside County Office of County Counsel in 2023. As his career has progressed, he has done litigation, transactional, and administrative work, and particularly enjoys his continued representation of local government agencies, especially appreciating work where he can see the direct impact his work can make on the local community, where policies can be implemented more quickly than at a state or federal level,

and can more directly impact peoples’ lives. As assistant county counsel, Ross does a large amount of administrative work for the office, plus some of almost everything else that the office does, including directly supporting the Registrar of Voters and the Department of Environmental Health.

As he was moving up into his legal career, through a mutual friend Ross met and married Melissa (not the author of this article), a native of Loma Linda, California, by way of (far) upstate New York. She is a therapist in private practice, and they have two children together, thirteen and eleven years old, plus three cats, Ziggy, Fiona, and Huckleberry, and a likely upcoming adoption of a fourth community cat, Goose. The family recently weathered Melissa’s breaking both of her arms in a fall and subsequent recovery earlier this year. In addition to the cats, the family particularly loves playing board games together and have a huge collection and can give lots of recommendations.

Regarding advice for newer lawyers that he would have appreciated understanding earlier in his career, Ross advises focusing on the job at hand to represent the client’s interest at a high level of quality. Be curious and ask questions; you never know what important fact you might find by continuing to ask “why.” Finally, when appearing in court, understand that a particular judge may decide something in your favor or not in your favor one day, regardless of the quality of your work and presentation. Be resilient because there is no guarantee that the same judge will rule the same way the next day.

*Melissa Cushman is a deputy county counsel with the Office of County Counsel, County of Riverside, specializing in land use and the California Environmental Quality Act.*



# Judicial Profile: Honorable Mark E. Singerton

by L. Alexandra Fong

*As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.*

~ Audrey Hepburn

On July 9, 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom appointed Mark E. Singerton a judge of the Riverside Superior Court, which was the first Japanese American appointed to the bench in Riverside County.<sup>1</sup>

On July 14, 2021, Justice Richard T. Fields, Associate Justice of the California Court of Appeals, Fourth Appellate District, Division Two administered the judicial oath of office and Judge Singerton was sworn in as a judicial officer. He was assigned to Department S-104 at the Southwest Justice Center in Murrieta, where he handled the misdemeanor calendar for several months. In January 2022, he was assigned to the Banning Justice Center, where he handled various types of criminal cases.

On September 10, 2021, Judge Singerton's formal enrobement ceremony was held at the Historic Courthouse in downtown Riverside. Notable speakers included then-Deputy District Attorney Francisco Navarro<sup>2</sup> and criminal defense attorney Darryl Exum. Once again, Justice Fields administered the oath of office. In his speech, Judge Singerton spoke about the sacrifices his mother made, so that he could remain close to his maternal family who resides in Japan. He spoke about the importance of the legal community to nurture the new attorneys beginning to practice and the village it takes to help the struggling foster youth within our community.

Judge Singerton is currently assigned to Department B-301 at the Banning Justice Center, where he handles misdemeanor and felony criminal trials.

Judge Singerton remains actively involved in Project Graduatel.<sup>3</sup> He is co-chair of the program's subcommittee with Malvina Ovanezova. Together, they – and other members of the subcommittee, which include other Educational Representatives, as well as employees of Riverside County Department of Public Social Services – Children's Services Division, arrange programs where speakers inspire the students to think about their future after graduating from high school. Judge Singerton arranged for a tour of one of The Walt Disney Company's (Disney) campus in Anaheim (not



Honorable Mark E. Singerton  
Photograph courtesy of Riverside  
County Department of Public Social  
Services

Disneyland) where the foster students were able to speak with and learn from Imagineers, who talked about their jobs with Disney. Judge Singerton is involved with the Inland Counties Judicial Mentorship Program, which was developed to assist attorneys interested in applying for a judicial position with the Superior Court. The purpose of the program is "to assist in the development of a qualified and more diverse judicial applicant pool."<sup>4</sup>

He is a member of the Judicial Appointments Committee of the California Asian-Pacific American Judges Association, where he worked on vetting potential judicial candidates. He is involved with the Career

Technical Education (CTE) pathways program through The Corona-Norco Unified School District and University of California Riverside - The Presley Center of Crime & Justice Studies, where he regularly speaks to students about careers in the law.

Judge Singerton is a coordinator for a local chapter of Lion's Heart, a non-profit organization that provides a platform for teens who want to volunteer in their communities.<sup>5</sup> This year, the high school students in his chapter are cleaning beaches and working at food banks on the weekends.

In addition to volunteering his time to help others, Judge Singerton enjoys traveling to various locations around the world. In 2022, he traveled with his family to Iceland and Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota. In 2023, he traveled with his family to Japan to visit his maternal relatives. His family recently traveled to Belgium, Norway, and France, where they visited Disneyland Paris in the summer of 2024, carefully planning their trip to miss the chaos of the Olympics in France.

*L. Alexandra Fong is a deputy county counsel for the County of Riverside, practicing juvenile dependency in its Child Welfare Division. She is chair of Project Graduate, a program of Riverside County Bar Foundation. She is co-chair of the Juvenile Law Section of RCBA and a member of the Bar Publications Committee. She is a past-president of RCBA (president in 2017-2018) and the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court (president in 2018-2019.) She is an Emeritus member of the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court.*



<sup>1</sup> To learn more about Mark Singerton's journey to become a judicial officer, please see the Opposing Counsel article in the May 2021 issue of *Riverside Lawyer*.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Navarro was appointed to the bench in February 2023.

<sup>3</sup> As an attorney, Judge Singerton was the appointed educational representative for several foster students. To learn more about Judge Singerton's work with Project Graduate, prior to taking the bench, please see the April 2022 issue of *Riverside Lawyer*.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.riverside.courts.ca.gov/general-information/community-outreach/inland-counties-judicial-mentorship>

<sup>5</sup> <https://lionsheartservice.org/>





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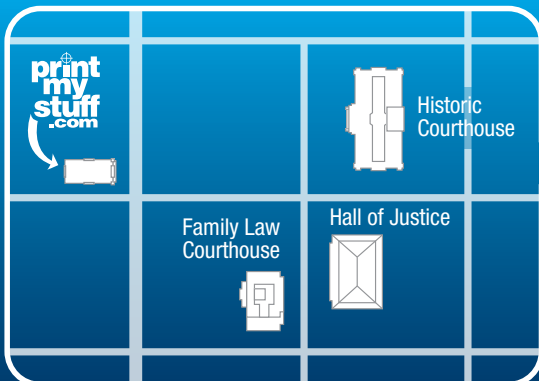
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## Part-Time Bookkeeper Position

RCBA is looking for a part-time bookkeeper. Contact Charlene at 951-682-1015 or charlene@riversidecountybar.com.

## 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@riversidecountybar.com.

## 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.



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, 2024.

**Garret Troy Arrieta (A)** – Law Student, San Diego

**Alexandria M. Camarella** – Varner & Brandt, Ontario

**Clement K. Chih** – Office of the County Counsel, Riverside

**Grace E. Garner** – Solo Practitioner, Palm Springs

**Michael Griffin (A)** – Brown White & Osborn, Redlands

**Jordan M. Gustafson** – Inland Counties Legal Services, Riverside

**Robert H. Mansouri (A)** – Law Student, Riverside

**Cassie M. Sands** – Law Office of Joyce M. Holcomb, San Bernardino

**Roi Wallace (A)** – Fennemore, San Bernardino

**Alan A. Zelaya** – Inland Counties Legal Services, Riverside

(A) – Designates Affiliate Member



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# CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER

- 4** Roundtable with Judge Hopp & Judge Greene  
12:15, Zoom  
MCLE
- 12** Landlord/Tenant Section Meeting Joint with SBCBA  
6:00 PM  
Ramiro's Cocina Mexicana, 9418 Magnolia Ave, Riverside  
Speaker: Commissioner Margaret Beare, Fontana Court  
MCLE
- 14** Estate Planning, Probate & Elder Law Section Meeting  
Holiday Social and Silent Auction  
4:00 – 6:00 PM, RCBA Gabbert Gallery
- 15** General Membership Meeting  
Noon, RCBA Gabbert Gallery  
Topic: "AI – Practical Use in Discovery"  
Speaker: Kelsie Russell  
MCLE
- 20** Estate Planning, Probate & Elder Law Section  
Noon, RCBA Gabbert Gallery  
Topic: Care Court  
Speakers: Judge Magdalena Cohen and Sheri Gulino  
MCLE

### Events Subject To Change

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

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

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

## MISSION STATEMENT

### Established in 1894

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

### RCBA Statement

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

### Membership Benefits

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

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

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

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



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