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There's Something about Martha: The First First Lady

Women and the Impact of Incarceration

*The Caregiver Tax: An Emerging Structural Challenge
in California's Legal Profession*



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RIVERSIDE LAWYER

MAGAZINE

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PRESIDENT'S Message

by Megan G. Demshki



Reflecting Forward on April: A Month of Good Citizenship

April brought several great RCBA programs that reminded me of the vital importance of good citizenship in our local community. From the practitioners and support staff to our judicial officers, a huge part of what makes the Riverside legal community so special is the people and their willingness to serve this community for the greater good.

April General Membership Meeting

On April 17, 2026, Presiding Judge Jacqueline Jackson provided membership with an update regarding State of the Court at the April General Membership Meeting. Thank you, Judge Jackson, for your thoughtful and informative presentation.

Past Presidents' Dinner

On April 22, 2026, over 20 past presidents of the RCBA gathered for the annual past presidents' dinner. It was a beautiful and inspiring evening filled with storytelling, reminiscing and connection. It provided me with an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and triumphs the RCBA has endured through our long history, due in large part to the leaders that have stepped up to serve (and continue to serve) our legal community.

Presiding Judge Jacqueline Jackson joined to give the attendees an update on the state of the Courts, and I updated the past presidents on the state of the RCBA.

Thank you to Robyn Lewis, Hon. Sophia Choi, and Charlene Nelson for your hard work making the event a success.

RCBA Good Citizenship Awards

On April 23, 2026, the RCBA hosted our annual Good Citizenship Awards at the Historic Courthouse. These awards are given to one student, a junior, from each participating Riverside County high school. The recipients are chosen by the principals of their schools based on their exemplary good citizenship. The students receive a monetary award and a certificate commemorating the day from the RCBA and Lawyer Referral Service, as well as certificates from the Riverside Superior Court and various state and federal officials.

This year we had the privilege of honoring 28 students from Riverside County high schools. It was a joyous afternoon filled with a celebration of important impact of good

citizenship in our community. It was inspiring to see the students' excitement to receive this meaningful recognition. I found it refreshing to celebrate an often-under-recognized accomplishment, especially in these increasingly divisive and challenging times.

Thank you Presiding Judge Jacqueline Jackson, Judge Dorothy McLaughlin, and Judge Sophia Choi for attending and speaking with the students. Your presence was so appreciated and made the afternoon memorable.

Thank you Charlene Nelson for coordinating the program.

Join us!

On May 15, 2025, please join us for the May General Membership Meeting at noon in the Gabbert Gallery. The speakers will be Brooke Jimenez, David Robinett, and David Rivera from Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Rudd and Romo. They will be discussing the recent United States Supreme Court decisions in *Mahmoud v. Taylor* and *Mirabelli v. Bonta*. In addition to the MCLE presentation, we will be celebrating our New Attorney Academy graduates. I hope to see you there.

Get Involved with the RCBA

I would love to hear from you! If you have any feedback or see an opportunity to grow the RCBA programming, please do not hesitate to reach out. I'm also happy to introduce you to new colleagues at any of our events. My email is megan@aitkenlaw.com and my phone number is (951) 534-4006.

Megan G. Demshki is the president of the RCBA and a partner at Aitken Aitken Cohn.



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BARRISTERS

President's Message

by Sharon P. Ramirez



As spring settles in and the days begin to stretch a little longer, this season brings with it a renewed sense of energy and that has certainly been true for RCBA Barristers. Even as we move past the midpoint of our term, our momentum hasn't slowed. If anything, it's a reminder that there is still so much more we have to offer our members in the months ahead!

As we look ahead, one of the highlights of this season is our 7th Annual Judicial Reception at Grier Pavilion on Thursday, May 14, 2026. I recently learned that this event was first started by former Barristers board member and now RCBA board member, Erica Alfaro, and it's meaningful to see how that vision has carried forward, creating a space where we come together to recognize and honor excellence within the Riverside legal community. This year, we are proud to recognize Judge Sophia Choi as Judicial Officer of the Year and Steven Harmon of the Riverside Public Defender's Office as Attorney of the Year. We're excited to continue building on this event with new additions this year, including live jazz music, exciting raffle prizes, and the return of our magician, alongside an evening centered on connection and celebration. We are grateful to our sponsors and to everyone who continues to support and contribute to this tradition.

There may still be time to RSVP if you haven't already—please check the link below to confirm availability. RSVPs officially close on May 8, 2026, and we hope to see you there: <https://rcbabarristersjudicialreception2026.eventbrite.com>

2026–2027 Barristers Board Elections – Thursday, June 25, 2026

The strength of the Barristers section is built on three essential pillars: (1) the engagement and participation of our members; (2) the continued support of our legal community and sponsors; and (3) the leadership, time, and commitment of our Board. If you are inter-



Carolyn Deal, Leo Herrera, Joscelyn Carrillo, Ryan Gallant



Sara Truitt, Sarah Jo Antonucci, Tony Bumpers (Proceed), Amanda Perez, Elizabeth Miffleton



Sharon Ramirez and Faran Imani with sponsors from Integrated Medical Centers

ested in serving on the 2026-2027 Barristers Board, or if you know someone who would be a great addition to the Board, please contact us at barristers@riversidecounty-bar.com. Nominations are due on or before Friday, May 15, 2026. Elections will be held on June 25, 2026, with a mixer at 5:00 p.m., and the elections starting at 5:30 p.m., in the Presidential Lounge located at the Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, 3649 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside.

Please note that in order to be nominated for next term's Board, you must: 1) be a Barristers member (i.e., an RCBA member in good standing who has been in practice fewer than seven years and/or is younger than thirty-seven years of age); and 2) have attended at least three Barristers events in the 2025–2026 term. If you have not attended three Barristers events this term, don't worry, there's still time! Barristers has several events planned between now and elections—see some of our upcoming events below. Notably, attending elections on June 25, counts towards the three-event requirement. If you have any questions about nominations or elections, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Past Events Recap

Barristers Happy Hour – April 17, 2026

Our April Happy Hour took place at Route 30 in downtown Riverside. It was one of those evenings where time seemed to stretch in the best way. Conversations flowed easily, people stayed long after they had planned, and it was especially encouraging to see new faces joining us for the first time. Events like these remind us that building relationships within the legal community doesn't always have to be formal, it can be as simple as sharing a table and getting to know one another. A special thank you to our sponsor, Integrated Medical Centers, for making the evening possible and for taking the time to share more about the services they provide to our community.

Joint Hike with HBAIE – April 25, 2026

We also had the opportunity to partner with the Hispanic Bar Association of the Inland Empire (HBAIE) for a joint hike up Mount Rubidoux, followed by brunch at Tio's Tacos. With beautiful weather and a strong turnout, it was the kind of day that reminded us how valuable it is to step outside of the office and connect in a different setting. We're grateful for opportunities like this to collaborate with fellow organizations and continue building a more connected legal community in the Inland Empire.

Group Golf Lessons – April – May 2026

Over the course of April and May, a dedicated group of Barristers participated in our five-week golf lesson series at Van Buren Golf Center. Under the guidance of instructor Mike Hancock, participants not only learned the fundamentals of the game but also gained confidence in a skill that often extends beyond the course and into professional settings. A sincere thank you to Proceed for sponsoring the golf lessons and supporting opportunities

that invest in the personal and professional development of our members.

Upcoming Events. You're Invited!

- **7th Annual Judicial Reception – Thursday, May 14, 2026, 5:00-7:30 p.m.** – Tickets on sale now! RSVP by May 8, purchase here: <https://rcbabarristersjudicialreception2026.eventbrite.com>
- **Barristers Happy Hour and New Attorney Academy Graduation Celebration** – Friday, May 15, 2026, starting at 2:30 p.m., Lake Alice, appetizers sponsored by Maasumi Headache & Spine Care
- **Barristers Happy Hour and 2026-2027 Board Elections** – Thursday, June 25, 2026, Mixer at 5:00 p.m., Elections at 5:30 p.m., Presidential Lounge at the Mission Inn, appetizers sponsored by Herrera Law

We are always happy to hear suggestions and ideas for events you are interested in seeing from Barristers. Please feel free to reach out! My contact information is below.

Barristers Board Spotlight: Kevin Collins, 2025-2026 Treasurer

Next up is Kevin!

Kevin manages and operates The Law Office of Kevin E. Collins, Jr., PC, with a background in plaintiff and defense-side employment litigation, as well as personal injury. This is his fourth year serving as treasurer and sixth year on the Barristers Board. Before becoming an attorney, he spent over a decade working in corporate accounting and finance, and this experience continues to inform his legal practice and, perhaps unsurprisingly, his role as treasurer. He values the friendships, opportunities, and support fostered by Barristers, all of which were instrumental early in his career and aims to pay that forward. Outside of work, he enjoys traveling, attending film festivals, and reading, with a particular fondness for authors like Heller and Vonnegut, whose trademark satire seems less and less absurd the older he gets.

Stay up to date on everything Barristers!

For upcoming events and updates:

Website: <https://www.rcbabarristers.com/>
check out our revamped website!

Facebook: RCBA Barristers

Instagram: @rcbabarristers

If you're interested in learning more about Barristers or you would like to attend one of our events, I am more than happy to connect with you and introduce you to our amazing members. Feel free to email me at sramirez@ramirezlaw.com or text or call at (909) 702-0058.

Sharon P. Ramirez is an attorney with Kenny Ramirez Law Firm located in San Bernardino, where she practices catastrophic personal injury. Sharon can be reached at sramirez@ramirezlaw.com.



The Caregiver Tax: An Emerging Structural Challenge in California's Legal Profession

by Nesa Targhibi

For decades, discussions of gender inequity in the legal profession have centered on the “motherhood penalty,” the well-documented disadvantages in compensation, advancement, and professional perception experienced by women after having children.¹ While this framework remains important, it does not fully capture the scope of modern caregiving demands. In California, demographic trends, particularly an aging population, are bringing increased attention to a broader concept: the caregiver tax.

The caregiver tax expands the analysis beyond parenthood to encompass the full range of caregiving responsibilities, including eldercare, care for disabled family members, and other dependent support. As California's population ages and multigenerational caregiving becomes more common, this broader lens highlights structural pressures within the legal profession that may influence career trajectories, particularly for women, who continue to shoulder a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities.²

From Motherhood Penalty to Caregiver Tax

The motherhood penalty has long been linked to persistent disparities in the legal profession. Despite women comprising the majority of law students in recent years, their representation declines at senior levels.³ National data reflects this pattern: women account for nearly half of law firm associates but a significantly smaller percentage of equity partners.⁴ This disparity is not attributable to a lack of qualification or ambition, but rather to structural and cultural dynamics that emerge over time.

Research from the American Bar Association (ABA) underscores these challenges. In a nationwide survey of more than 8,000 attorneys, over half of working mothers reported being perceived as less committed or less competent after having children.⁵ Many also reported experiencing bias, including demeaning comments related to their caregiving roles.⁶ These findings reflect the persistence of assumptions that can affect access to opportunities and advancement.

The caregiver tax builds on this framework but recognizes that caregiving extends beyond early parenthood. Attorneys increasingly face responsibilities such as caring for aging parents or coordinating long-term medical care for family members. Unlike parental leave, these responsibilities are often less predictable and may extend over longer

periods. While these pressures can affect attorneys across demographics, they continue to fall disproportionately on women.⁷

California-Specific Trends and Pressures

California illustrates these dynamics in a particularly pronounced way. Women now comprise approximately 57% of newly admitted attorneys in the state, yet their representation declines at higher levels of seniority, particularly among equity partners.⁸ Surveys of large law firms indicate that women make up a substantial portion of associates but remain underrepresented in leadership roles.⁹

At the same time, caregiving responsibilities are widespread. Approximately 23% of California adults provide care to an older relative or dependent, often while maintaining full-time employment.¹⁰ As the state's population continues to age, these responsibilities are expected to increase, adding new pressures for working professionals, including attorneys.

Within law firms, these realities intersect with traditional advancement structures. The billable hour model, expectations of constant availability, and the emphasis on high-visibility assignments may create challenges for attorneys with ongoing caregiving responsibilities. Studies and commentary suggest that women are more likely to reduce billable hours, decline certain assignments, or transition into alternative roles in order to meet caregiving demands.¹¹ Over time, these adjustments may affect compensation and advancement.

These dynamics also influence career pathways. Reports have highlighted a trend of mid-career attorneys transitioning from large law firms to boutique practices, solo practice, or in-house roles, citing work-life balance and caregiving considerations as contributing factors.¹² While such transitions can offer flexibility, they may also reflect structural limitations within traditional law firm models.

Structural Systems and Cultural Norms

Law firms have taken steps to address gender disparities, including implementing parental leave policies and flexible work arrangements. However, many of these initiatives remain focused on early parenthood and may not fully address broader caregiving responsibilities, such as eldercare.

Even where policies exist, workplace culture can shape their effectiveness. Attorneys who utilize flexible schedules

1 See, e.g., Am. Bar Ass'n Comm'n on Women in the Pro., *Legal Careers of Parents and Child Caregivers* (2023).

2 *Id.*

3 Am. Bar Ass'n, *ABA Profile of the Legal Profession* (2023).

4 Nat'l Ass'n for Law Placement, *2023 Report on Diversity in U.S. Law Firms*.

5 Am. Bar Ass'n Comm'n on Women in the Pro., *supra* note 1.

6 *Id.*

7 *Id.*

8 State Bar of California, *2025 Annual Report*.

9 Nat'l Ass'n for Law Placement, *supra* note 4.

10 AARP, *California Caregiving Survey* (2025).

11 Am. Bar Ass'n, *Legal Careers of Parents and Child Caregivers*, *supra* note 1.

12 Am. Bar Ass'n, *Leaving Big Law to Form Your Own Firm* (2021); see also Christine Lagorio-Chafkin, *The Silent Exodus: Why Work-Life Balance Is One of the Biggest Challenges for Female Lawyers*, *Forbes* (2025).

or reduced-hour arrangements may encounter assumptions about their availability or commitment, which can affect access to assignments or mentorship opportunities.¹³ In addition, research has identified a tendency for women attorneys to be assigned non-billable or lower-visibility tasks, sometimes referred to as “office housework”, that do not contribute directly to advancement.¹⁴

The broader culture of overwork in the legal profession further complicates these issues. Advancement is often tied to billable hours and constant responsiveness, creating structural challenges for attorneys balancing sustained caregiving responsibilities. As a result, even well-intentioned policies may not fully mitigate the long-term impact of caregiving on career progression.

Legal Protections and Persistent Gaps

California provides certain legal protections for caregivers. The California Family Rights Act (CFRA) allows eligible employees to take up to twelve weeks of job-protected leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition.¹⁵ The Paid Family Leave (PFL) program provides partial wage replacement for a limited period.¹⁶

However, these protections are limited in duration and scope. PFL does not independently guarantee job protection, and CFRA is structured around specific qualifying events rather than ongoing caregiving needs. For attorneys managing long-term eldercare or intermittent caregiving responsi-

13 Am. Bar Ass'n Comm'n on Women in the Pro., supra note 1.

14 Nat'l Ass'n for Law Placement, supra note 4.

15 Cal. Gov't Code § 12945.2.

16 Cal. Unemp. Ins. Code §§ 3300–3306.

bilities, these frameworks may not fully address the realities of their situations.

These limitations suggest that formal legal protections, while important, may not fully resolve the structural and cultural dimensions of the caregiver tax within the legal profession.

Spotlight on the Caregiver Tax: Implications for Law Firms

The caregiver tax is an emerging structural challenge in the legal profession, one that affects career progression, retention, and leadership pipelines. As caregiving responsibilities extend beyond early parenthood to include eldercare and other long-term obligations, attorneys, particularly women, face ongoing adjustments to workloads, availability, and professional opportunities.

For law firm leadership, these trends carry practical consequences. Patterns of career transitions, reduced billable hours, or missed high-visibility assignments reflect systemic pressures that, if unrecognized, can influence talent retention, institutional knowledge, and leadership diversity. Bringing attention to the caregiver tax encourages leaders to assess how caregiving responsibilities shape professional trajectories, support equitable advancement, and ensure that highly skilled attorneys remain engaged and on track for leadership roles.

Nesa Targhibi is a sole practitioner and owner of Holborn Law APC based in Riverside and San Bernardino County. She practices in the area of Trust and Probate.



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UCR's First Steps towards the Legal Profession

by Adelina Hernandez

Hello, my name is Adelina Hernandez and as a dedicated pre-law student. I write to elevate the often-overlooked voices of future legal professionals within the legal community. I graduated from University of California, Riverside (UCR) with a B.A. in political science/law and society, magnum cum laude. During my time on campus, I have helped contribute to the UCR law and society major and pre-law community by serving on the search committee to hire the new pre-law advisor. I am here to share personal insight into the rise of the future legal leaders of tomorrow, UCR's pre-law students. With this article, I hope to bridge the perspective gap between pre-law students and attorneys in Riverside.

Before UCR transitioned to serving the pre-law community, the university was traditionally recognized for its stable pipeline programs and offices assisting students in fields such as business, engineering, and health. All prominent programs dedicated to preparing young aspiring scholars for their future professional careers, and at the time, UCR had yet to invest in a similar program for law. Pre-law students typically had to rely on resources outside of campus to gain guidance on how best to prepare. This was a deficit that definitely needed to be addressed as the pre-law community continued to expand, with students demanding dedicated resources to improve their chances of getting into law school.

Over time, the school did offer a law and society major that could be added to selected majors, including anthropology, economics, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology. These additional majors allowed students to tailor their core requirements and electives to courses that focused on the legal perspective of their discipline. Unfortunately, with the law and society director retiring, the concentration was in disarray. The required classes for graduation were no longer available, prompting students to seek guidance from their selective advisors, who were often ill equipped to help with law school preparation. This concern, however, would be later addressed by the university as they realized pre-law students were at a disadvantage due to a lack of established resources.

As a result, UCR took a bold new step in the legal community by bringing together professors with Juris Doctorates and faculty from the law and society major to discuss how best to serve the pre-law student population. I was honored to be selected to be a part of

the meeting, as it allowed me to advocate for pre-law students and help brainstorm how to best revamp the major. Soon after, the pre-professional advising center (PPAC) recognized the need and became the first office on campus to hire an official pre-law advisor, Lawrance Edwards, known as LA to many. In his first week, LA's calendar filled quickly as students booked appointments to meet their new law advisor. His work included creating interactive workshops on topics such as "First Year Classes in Law School," "Law School Info Session," and "Intro to Pre-Law." At these events, students of all majors and class standings attended, eager to ask questions and take notes on preparing for their futures. Beyond the workshops, he brought law school admissions representatives, notably from Yale and UCI. Overall, his role has become pivotal to the pre-law UCR community.

Unfortunately, before the addition of LA, many students had to rely on getting their information and guidance online, often from misinformed forums. Many questions that could have been answered in a quick conversation with an attorney over coffee, but because about half of the pre-law student population on campuses are either first-generation and/ or low-income, they lacked access to an attorney for mentorship. So the positive impact of having someone like LA on campus reduces misinformation and ultimately improves preparation, which could be the difference between a student getting into law school or being rejected. Law school is more than mere social mobility or prestige; it's also a substantial financial investment. So, having access to schedule an appointment with your pre-law advisor and talk out not only your concerns but also gain one-on-one support can be the final push that solidifies your success as a competitive applicant to law school.

Moreover, UCR has been fortunate to have wonderful professors, two of whom I would like to highlight for their personal dedication to motivating and mentoring pre-law students, Professors Peter Mort and Ronald O. Loveridge, both housed in the political science department. Professor Mort is the primary instructor of the Moot Court class, which teaches students to practice legal advocacy through demonstrated legal research and oral arguments. This program has been recognized countless times by faculty and students alike, with gratitude for his work in better preparing students for the legal field through hands-on experience.

In addition, Professor Loveridge has done the same, as he hosts the Loveridge fellowship, which funds 12 students to intern in the California state capital with federal and state senators, assembly members, and non-profit advocacy groups for the summer. Personally, I have been selected as a fellow and will be interning this summer. This internship helps students demonstrate leadership and adaptability in learning, all while feeding their passion for state politics and law, but this time in public policy.

Finally, courses and programs like this are the backbone to advisors like LA; they all play an important role in the pivotal success of future legal leaders, UCR pre-law students.

Adelina Hernandez graduated from UCR with a B.A. in political science/law in June 2025, is a pre-law student, and a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. This summer, she will be interning with California Forward, conducting public policy research..



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The Lioness and the Law

by Mary Shafizadeh

Imagine waking up in a world where a woman's life is no longer fully her own. Instead, it is shaped by the men who hold legal authority over her. In this reality, the law treats her as a dependent, blurring the line between protection and control.¹ The most basic freedoms, such as pursuing a career, choosing where to live, or seeing the world, are no longer hers to exercise freely, but may depend on the permission of a husband or father.²

In this society, a woman's voice is diminished. She is barred from the full authority of the judge's bench. In certain legal contexts, her testimony carries less weight than that of a man, and her inheritance is fixed at a fraction of her male counterpart's share.³ Even in death, the legal value of her life is priced at a half-rate discount.⁴ From childhood, her autonomy is limited. If unmarried, she is subject to her father's authority; upon marriage, that authority may shift to her husband.⁵

The law demands her absolute "obedience" in exchange for her basic needs. Her right to food and housing is legally tied to her submission, which includes being sexually available to her husband.⁶ A quiet wife, a nurturing mother, she lives with the knowledge that her daughter may be legally bound in marriage as young as nine years old.⁷ Should her own home break apart, she knows the law will likely pull her children from her arms to be raised by their father the moment they reach the age of seven.⁸

In this world, even her presence in public is regulated. Her body is treated as a source of potential sin, and she is legally responsible for ensuring she does not tempt men.⁹ If she allows her hair to catch the breeze or wears clothing deemed indecent, she faces the sting of the lash or the darkness of a prison cell.¹⁰ And if she speaks, challenging

the system that governs her life, she risks consequences that extend beyond criticism, including detention and prosecution.¹¹

While this world may feel distant from the secular democracy of the United States, it reflects the daily reality for many women in Iran under a theocratic regime. To some, this system is merely a subject to be read about, debate, or analyze; for others, however, it is personal. In the aftermath of the revolution that brought this system into power, my grandfather, Brigadier General Ayat Mohagheghi, was executed. His life was shaped, and ultimately taken, by a legal system that had changed faster than many could comprehend.

To understand how a country can change so dramatically, it's important to understand what Iran once was, and what it was becoming. Before the Iranian Revolution, Iran, then known as the Imperial State of Iran, was a monarchy under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. Through a series of reforms known as the 1963 White Revolution, the country moved toward modernization and land reform. Women were granted the right to vote and stand for parliament.

The 1967 Family Protection Law, later expanded in 1975, significantly restructured family law: it limited men's unilateral right to divorce, expanded women's rights in divorce and custody, required court oversight for polygamy, and raised the minimum marriage age for girls to eighteen. Women did not merely enter the workforce; they presided over courtrooms as judges and served in government offices.¹²

Economically, Iran was also growing. Oil revenues fueled development, and the country increasingly resembled Western nations in its institutions and social structure.¹³

But beneath that progress, tension was building. For some Iranians, modernization felt imposed rather than chosen. Traditional and religious communities feared that Iran was losing its cultural and Islamic identity. Policies that restricted religious expression, including limitations

appearing in public without religious hijab).

- ¹¹ *Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Book Two* art. 286 (defining "spreading corruption on earth" as a capital offense); id., *Book Five* art. 500 (penalizing "propaganda against the State"), art. 610 (criminalizing assembly and collusion to act against national security).
- ¹² *Family Protection Law of Iran* art. 8 (establishing mutual grounds for divorce), art. 14 (restricting polygamy); Haleh Esfandiari, *Iran and the Women's Question*, Atlantic Council (Feb. 4, 2019), <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/iran-and-the-women-s-question/> (noting that the 1975 revision "raised the age of marriage to eighteen for girls").
- ¹³ Suzanne Maloney, *The Revolutionary Economy*, U.S. Inst. of Peace: The Iran Primer (Oct. 11, 2010), <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/revolutionary-economy>.

- ¹ *Iran Const.* art. 20, 21 (limiting rights to "Islamic criteria").
- ² *Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran* art. 1117 (allowing a husband to bar his wife from employment); *Passport Law of the Islamic Republic of Iran* art. 18 (requiring male guardian consent for travel).
- ³ *Law on the Qualifications for Appointment of Judges* (1982) (restricting the position of presiding judge to men); *Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran* art. 199 (weight of testimony); *Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran* art. 907 (establishing that a son inherits twice the share of a daughter).
- ⁴ *Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran* art. 550 (valuation of blood money).
- ⁵ *Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran* art. 1043 (mandating the consent of the father or paternal grandfather for marriage).
- ⁶ *Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran* art. 1105, 1108 (naming the husband "head of the household" and linking the right to maintenance to the wife's submission, or tamkin).
- ⁷ *Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran* art. 1041 (permitting child marriage), art. 1210, Note 1 (defining the age of maturity for girls as nine lunar years).
- ⁸ *Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran* art. 1169 (custody transfer at age seven).
- ⁹ *Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Book Five* art. 638 (criminalizing acts that offend public decency or violate Islamic taboos).
- ¹⁰ *Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Book Five* art. 638, Note (establishing penalties of imprisonment or lashing for women

on traditional dress, were experienced not as liberation, but as coercion.

At the same time, political dissent was tightly controlled through the Shah's security apparatus. As discontent grew, a broad coalition began to form, bringing together students, intellectuals, religious leaders, and women, united not by a shared vision, but by a shared dissatisfaction.

Into that moment stepped Ruhollah Khomeini, an exiled cleric who spoke of justice, morality, and a return to Islamic values. For many, his message was not one of restriction, but of restoration, offering a promise to reclaim identity and dignity.

They marched for a revolution, unaware they were inviting a system that would force women back into traditional roles as homemakers and mothers, treating them as domestic subjects rather than legal equals. It was the ultimate cautionary tale: they wished for the end of a monarchy, only to find that revolutions do not merely replace a ruler, they can invert the soul of the law itself.

In January 1979, the Shah departed into exile, and Ruhollah Khomeini returned to Iran. Within months, the legal and social order of the country would be fundamentally reshaped.¹⁴

Consequently, in 1979, the foundation of the Iranian legal system shifted. The country moved from a secular monarchy to a theocratic republic, where the law was no longer anchored in civil principles, but instead in the doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqih*, the absolute rule of a supreme jurist answerable to no one.

Under this new order, Western culture was banned, Iranian women were stripped of their equality, and the brutal punishments of traditional Islamic law were reinstated. The consequences of this constitutional pivot were immediate and devastating; essentially overnight, a decade of progress was erased by executive decree. Female judges were stripped of their robes and demoted, while the landmark 1975 Family Protection Law was suspended.



Brigadier General Ayat Mohagheghi, Commander of Mehrabad's 1st Tactical Air Base and member of Iran's elite Golden Crown aerobatic team, in full dress uniform. Photo courtesy of the Mohagheghi family.



Pari Mohagheghi with Reza Pahlavi, Crown Prince of Iran, at the World Affairs Council of Orange County. Pahlavi has spent decades in exile advocating for a secular democratic Iran, a vision of freedom, human rights, and constitutional government that men like Ayat Mohagheghi gave their lives for. Photo courtesy of the Mohagheghi family.

II, the Commander of Mehrabad's 1st Tactical Air Base, and a member of the elite Golden Crown aerobatic team. To our family, however, he was a husband to my grandmother, a father to my mother, and a brother to my great-aunt. He was a man whose private devotion reflected the same integrity that defined his public service.

In 1980, that duty led him to the Nojeh coup, a coordinated effort by military personnel to dismantle the emerging theocracy and restore

In its place, mandatory veiling laws were introduced, and the legal framework governing marriage and family shifted significantly, including lowering the minimum marriage age for girls to just nine. The new regime did not merely change the law; it invaded the private lives of its citizens. Men and women generally could not walk on the streets, drive, or shop together unless they carried proof of an immediate familial bond. Even the sanctuary of the home vanished, as Revolutionary Committees claimed the right to barge into any gathering suspected of mixed-gender non-conformity. Bright colors were replaced by a space of dark, ankle length coats.

For a lawyer, the laws read like a manual for erasure: a woman's court testimony was reduced to half that of a man's, and her very life was valued at a fifty-percent discount in blood-money compensation. Any defiance was met with the sting of lashing, stoning, or worse. The state had replaced the rule of law with a rule of gendered submission.¹⁵

The collapse of the legal system was not merely a matter of changing statutes; it was a human catastrophe that claimed the nation's most elite defenders. Among them was my grandfather, Brigadier General Ayat Mohagheghi. To the world, he was a "Top Gun" fighter pilot of the F-4 Phantom



Brigadier General Ayat Mohagheghi before the Islamic Revolutionary Tribunal of the Army, 1980. Source: doctv.ir; re-uploaded to YouTube by Bahram Irandoost (July 5, 2017). (Iran is not a signatory to the Berne Convention and maintains no bilateral copyright treaty with the United States, rendering this material unprotectable under U.S. copyright law. Reproduced for purposes of commentary and historical reporting. 17 U.S.C. § 107.)

¹⁴ Haleh Esfandiari, *Iranian Women: From Enthusiasm to Rebellion*, Wilson Ctr. (Feb. 12, 2024), <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/iranian-women-enthusiasm-rebellion> (describing the diverse coalition of the 1979 revolution and the subsequent legal betrayal of the secular and female participants); *Ayatollah Khomeini Returns to Iran*, History.com (Feb. 9, 2010), <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/february-1-ayatollah-khomeini-returns-to-iran> (describing the massive crowds and religious fervor that greeted Khomeini upon his return from exile); *1979: Exiled Ayatollah Khomeini Returns to Iran*, BBC News (Feb. 1, 2009), http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/1/newsid_2521000/2521003.stm.

¹⁵ Haleh Esfandiari, *Iran and the Women's Question*, Atlantic Council (Feb. 4, 2019), <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/iran-and-the-women-s-question/>.

secular constitutional rule. My grandfather did not view this as a quest for power, but as a moral obligation to protect Iranian citizens from an encroaching religious totalitarianism.

The attempt was short-lived. On the night of July 9, as participants converged near Nojeh Air Base, they expected to proceed with a coordinated military action involving aircraft and ground elements. Instead, they encountered an ambush. The operation had been compromised, and the authorities had reportedly received prior knowledge of the plan.

What followed was not a trial in any recognizable legal sense, but a televised instrument of political elimination. Standing before a revolutionary court, my grandfather remained defiant, maintaining that his allegiance belonged to the safety of the Iranian people rather than a specific religious authority.

The judicial process was chillingly efficient. He was arrested, tried, and executed by firing squad within a ten-day window. He went from the cockpit of a fighter jet to a martyr's grave in less time than a standard civil appeal, leaving behind a legacy defined by the very freedom he gave his life to defend.¹⁶

The execution of individuals such as my grandfather was not an isolated end, but part of a broader pattern of state violence that unfolded in the years following the revolution.

In 2022, this cycle claimed twenty-two-year-old Mahsa Jina Amini, who was arrested by the morality police for an improper hijab and died in their custody three days later. Her death ignited the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement (*Zan, Zendegi, Azadi*), the largest uprising in Iran since the 1979 Revolution.

Women burned their headscarves in the streets, and men marched alongside them, united by a demand that was fundamentally simple: the right to choose. Not a state



Roya Mohagheghi, daughter of Brigadier General Ayat and Pari Mohagheghi, blows out candles at her birthday celebration, surrounded by family and friends in pre-revolutionary Iran. The casual joy of the moment – girls and boys gathered together, dressed freely – reflects an ordinary childhood that the revolution would render extraordinary. Photo courtesy of the Mohagheghi family.



Pari Mohagheghi visits patients during a hospital outreach in pre-revolutionary Iran, where women worked openly alongside male colleagues in professional settings. After 1979, that integration would be dismantled by law, and women's presence in public life – professional and otherwise – would be sharply curtailed. Photo courtesy of the Mohagheghi family.

mandate to cover their hair, and not a mandate to uncover it, but the principle of individual autonomy over one's own body.

The state's response was a chilling echo of the 1980 purges: authorities vilified protesters and deployed a systematic arsenal of physical, psychological, and sexual violence to suppress peaceful dissent.¹⁷

Today, that fight continues, and it is one every lawyer in this country has a stake in understanding. Decades after the revolution stripped Iranian women of rights they had spent generations earning, they are still fighting for the very principles that define our own legal system.

They are marching for a constitution that constrains the government rather than the citizen, an independent judiciary free from clerical interference, and the basic protections reflected in documents such as the Bill of Rights, including freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, and security of person.

For an Iranian woman today, the rule of law is not an abstract theory; it is a life-or-death struggle for the same constitutional safeguards that permit us to practice law, express dissent, and live without fear of the state.

As lawyers, we swore an oath to support the Constitution of the United States and the

Constitution of the State of California, and to discharge our duties with knowledge, ability, dignity, courtesy, and integrity. In the daily demands of practice, the deadlines, billing pressures, and procedural hurdles, it is easy to treat that oath as a formality. Yet Iran's history is a reminder that such commitments are not ceremonial; they are a privilege of the highest order.

The women (and men) in Iran chanting *Zan, Zendegi, Azadi* are, quite literally, dying for the rights that we have available to us at our fingertips. They are fighting for the very principles enshrined in our founding documents: the right to personal security, the right to equality before the law, the right to due process, and the right to a legal system in which the law serves as a safeguard for the individual rather than an instrument of state control.

¹⁶ See *Ayat Mohaqeqi: One Person's Story*, Abdorrahman Boroumand Ctr. for Hum. Rts. in Iran, <https://www.iranrights.org/memorial/story/12913/ayat-mohaqeqi> (last visited Apr. 8, 2026) (detailing the 1980 trial and summary execution of Brig. Gen. Mohagheghi); see also Bahram Irandoost, Brigadier General Pilot Ayat Mohagheghi – Part 1, YouTube (July 5, 2017), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPPDUPEpxCs> (televised trial footage of Brig. Gen. Mohagheghi discussing his military duty and the objectives of the 1980 Nojeh Coup).

¹⁷ U.N. Human Rights Council, Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/55/67 (Feb. 2, 2024), <https://docs.un.org/en/a/hrc/55/67>.

Whether you are a transactional attorney drafting agreements that rely on the certainty of the law, or a litigator standing in a courtroom defending a client's liberty, you are a steward of the very principles that others are still fighting to secure. We are entrusted not only to hold these rights, but to exercise them and ensure they remain meaningful, functional, and accessible.

And as we grow as lawyers, we should recognize that our work is living proof that a constitutional system can function. We owe it to those who are currently risking everything for these principles to practice with the dignity, integrity, and diligence they deserve. We are not merely

billing hours; we are participating in the preservation of the very rights that so many, including my grandfather, died to protect, and that a new generation continues to fight to reclaim. We should not take the availability of the law for granted.

Mary Shafizadeh, of the Law Office of Maryam Shafizadeh, practices criminal law, family law, and intellectual property. Committed to helping individuals and entrepreneurs navigate new chapters, she provides robust defense in criminal cases, compassionate guidance through family law matters, and strategic support for creative and digital ventures in intellectual property.



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There's Something About Martha: The First First Lady

by Abram S. Feuerstein

History may treat her as a kindly, if not grandmotherly first first lady, the person who more than any other defined the role and set the tone for presidential spouses, but Martha Washington viewed herself differently.

"They call me First Lady in the land and think I must be extremely happy," she told Alexander Hamilton's wife, Eliza. In reality, she noted, "They might more properly call me the Chief State Prisoner."¹

"I have a very dull life here and know nothing that passes in the town," Martha explained to a niece about her life in New York City, the nation's first capital. "There are certain bounds set for me which I must not depart from, and as I can not do as I like, I am obstinate and stay at home a great deal."²

From the start, Martha had mixed feelings about George Washington's unanimous election as the first president in 1789. She wrote to a nephew that she was "truly sorry" that he accepted the presidency. "When or whether he will ever come home again, God only knows. I think it was much too late for him to go into public life again, but it was not to be avoided. Our family will be deranged as I must soon follow him."³

Both Martha and George treasured their domestic life at Mount Vernon, where they were at their happiest. Together. She hoped to grow old there, enjoying her family while George sat under his "vines and fig trees."⁴ But duty called, and George needed his helpmate. So shortly after his inauguration, Martha did what she always had done. At age 58, she packed up the Mount Vernon household, made her way to New York to join her husband in what became something of a grand pro-



The Washington Family (1789-1796), painted by Edward Savage, National Gallery of Art. The president has his hand on a building plan for the new US capital, and is depicted with Martha and his grandchildren. In the background is Christopher Sheels, an enslaved attendant to the president.



Martha Washington (The Athenaeum Portrait), Gilbert Stuart, 1796, jointly owned by the National Portrait Gallery and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. It is thought to be Stuart's only painting of Martha Washington.

cession,⁵ and set about inventing the role of "first lady."

Becoming Martha Washington

Martha Dandridge was born on June 2, 1731, to Fanny Jones and Jack Dandridge, at Chestnut Grove, a two-story house located on a 500 acre, mid-sized but genteel Virginia tobacco plantation which, based on acreage, likely had between 15-20 slaves.⁶ She was the oldest of eight children. As the oldest, she learned household chores that would have included helping to raise her siblings, cooking, setting tables correctly, making soap, and sewing, embroidery and needlepoint.⁷ But she also learned social and conversational skills and mastered dancing, a crucial talent for any upper-class

18th Century Virginian.⁸ She did not have a formal education, but through homeschooling she possessed strong math skills and became a lifelong reader. Religion (the Church of England) was part of her upbringing, too, and during her life she would devote part of each day to reading the Bible.⁹

By age 17, with her good manners, amiable personality, and a petite figure (she was less than five feet tall), Martha was considered quite the "catch." Although lacking a large dowry (chiefly because of the large number of her siblings),¹⁰ she attracted the attention of Daniel Parke Custis, the son of one of Virginia's richest men. Custis was twenty years older than Martha and had never married. But Daniel's father — who himself appears to have had a marriage from hell — opposed his marriage to Martha or any other person and stated that he would disown his son if he went ahead with

1 Cokie Roberts, *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation* (Harper Collins First Perennial ed. 2005) ("Founding Mothers"), p. 235.

2 *Founding Mothers*, p. 235.

3 *Founding Mothers*, p. 225-26.

4 Washington used the Biblical reference of "vine and fig tree" numerous times in his correspondence as a way to express the contentment and security he felt at Mount Vernon. See "Vine and Fig Tree," retrieved at <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/vine-and-fig-tree>; see also, Brady, p. 213.

5 *Founding Mothers*, p. 230-31.

6 Patricia Brady, *Martha Washington: An American Life* (Viking 2005) (hereafter, "Brady"), pp. 20-22.

7 Brady, p. 23.

8 Brady, p. 24. Brady notes that "(p)eripatetic dancing masters made a circuit from neighborhood to neighborhood, gathering all the planters' children at one of their houses for lessons that would continue for two or three long days," and that "(d)ancing was far more essential in the eighteenth century to a Virginia girl's education than reading, writing, or arithmetic." Brady, p. 24.

9 Brady, pp. 25, 188.

10 Brady, p. 27. Brady describes her as a "pocket Venus." *Id.*

the marriage.¹¹ Remarkably, the 18-year old Martha then went to meet with Daniel's 70-year old father and somehow won him over. A family lawyer wrote to Daniel shortly after the meeting:

"I am empowered by your father to let you know that he heartily and willingly consents to your marriage with Miss Dandridge – that he has so good a character of her, that he had rather you should have her than any lady in Virginia – nay, if possible, he is as much enamored with her character as you are with her person, and this is owing chiefly to a prudent speech of her own. Hurry down immediately for fear he should change the strong inclination he has to your marrying directly."¹²

Daniel's father then made a will in his son's favor and promptly died. Daniel inherited 18,000 acres of land, 300 enslaved people, several houses, and substantial cash and English treasury notes.¹³ Martha and Daniel married several months later.

Martha and Daniel had four children in the seven years in which they were married before Daniel, unexpectedly, died in 1757. At a time when only about 60 percent of children survived until the age of 20,¹⁴ two of their children died of disease at ages 2 and 4. Widowed and raising her remaining two children, after her husband's death, Martha was left to manage the large estate.¹⁵ Apparently, she did so capably if not impressively.

Along Came George

By March 1758, two suitors actively pursued the wealthy and attractive 27-year-old Martha, who surely must have been Virginia's top trophy-ette. On the one hand, there was the extremely wealthy, 50-year-old tobacco planter, Charles Carter. Both of his prior wives had died, leaving him with a dozen children of which ten, ranging in age from two to twenty, lived at home.¹⁶ On the other hand, there was the 6 foot 2 George Washington, a bachelor 8-months Martha's junior, with a commanding presence forged from his military service in the French and Indian Wars. Easy choice. George and Martha married on January 6, 1759, and the couple moved to Mount Vernon.

George and Martha did not have any children of their own. He blamed Martha's difficult, last childbirth as the reason she could not bear children but an early bout of smallpox may have left Washington, the future father of the country, sterile.¹⁷ In addition to becoming the manager of the Custis estate (which magically enabled him to pay off his debts and expand the size of Mount Vernon), George became the guardian of Martha's remaining two children. Sadly, she would outlive them both.

First, Martha's youngest child, Patsy (aka Martha), began to have epileptic seizures at the age of twelve.¹⁸ The couple tried every type of possible cure – from mercury, to purging,



Martha's daughter Patsy (aka Martha), at age 16, a year before she died from epilepsy. Miniature portrait by Charles Willson Peale, 1772, watercolor on ivory (Mount Vernon Ladies' Association)

to hiring a blacksmith to make a ring for Patsy's finger that supposedly when worn could prevent seizures.¹⁹ In June of 1773, at age 17, Patsy died in a sudden last seizure. George wrote that Martha had been reduced "to the lowest ebb of Misery."²⁰

Martha's last child, Jacky, was something of a fop. She and George engaged tutors for him, but Jacky showed little interest in formal education or for that matter in farming or any other type of career. He liked gambling and horse racing. George observed that his stepson's mind was centered on "Dogs Horses & Guns" and "Dress & equipage."²¹ In fact, Jacky secretly became engaged while attending school in Maryland. When George learned of the engagement, he persuaded the young couple to postpone their marriage. George then arranged for Jacky to attend King's College (now Columbia) in New York, but Jacky dropped out and the couple married a year later. They had seven children over the next seven years, with four surviving into adulthood.

Jacky, however, would die in 1781. He had persuaded Washington to allow him to join the Continental Army as it surrounded Cornwallis's army at Yorktown.²² In the overly crowded and unhygienic conditions, he contracted camp fever (likely typhus) and passed away shortly before his 27th birthday. After he died, his widow, Eleanor, allowed the Washingtons to adopt and raise the two youngest grand-children, George Washington Parke Custis (aka "Wash") and Elenor Parke Custis (aka "Nelly"), giving the family-oriented Martha another chance at parenting.²³

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Martha at War

George Washington gradually embraced the patriot cause as England increased its economic regulation of the colonies. He attended the First Continental Congress as part of the Virginia delegation in the Fall of 1774. It called for the boycott of British goods as a response to the Intolerable Acts passed by Parliament following the Boston Tea Party. A second Congress reconvened in May 1775, shortly after the battles of Lexington and Concord, and by mid-June 1775 it unanimously selected Washington to command the Continental Army and resist the British siege of Boston.

Washington had misgivings about his appointment. Notwithstanding his characteristic self-confidence, he expressed doubts about his own abilities to lead the army.²⁴ But mostly he regretted leaving the happiness of his domestic life with Martha at Mount Vernon. In one of his few surviving letters to Martha (after his death Martha destroyed their four decades of correspondence to each other), he wrote, sheepishly, that

11 Brady, pp. 29-31, 34.

12 Brady, p. 32.

13 Brady, p. 34.

14 See "Ten Facts About Martha Washington," retrieved at <https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/martha-washington/ten-facts-about-martha-washington>.

15 Daniel Custis died intestate. Accordingly, Martha possessed a dower interest entitling her to a life estate in one third of her deceased husband's property while she managed the remainder of the estate for her children. Brady, p. 52.

16 Brady, p. 55.

17 Brady, p. 75.

18 Brady, p. 78.

19 Brady, p. 79.

20 Brady, p. 86.

21 See "John Parke Custis," retrieved at <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/john-parke-custis>.

22 Brady, pp. 138-39.

23 Brady, pp. 146-47.

24 Brady, p. 94.

he had not sought the appointment and begged her not to be unhappy with him. "I should enjoy more real happiness and felicity in one month with you, at home, than I have the most distant prospect of reaping abroad, if my stay was to be Seven times Seven years," he said. He tried to reassure her that he would "return safe to you in the fall" once the hostilities were over.²⁵

But the war lasted eight years. George found the separation from Martha to be difficult, and he sent for her once the fighting had largely ceased and the troops settled into their winter camps. She arrived in Cambridge in December 1775 and remained at camp until May 1776. In May, to provide an example for the troops, Martha then traveled to Philadelphia, where she was inoculated for smallpox.²⁶ Martha was 44 at the time. She had never traveled north of Virginia before, much less lived in army camps.²⁷ But she repeated this pattern each year for the remainder of the war years.

In fact, Martha would spend almost half of the war years at camp with her husband. She was there at Valley Forge ministering to the troops, and at Morristown, Philadelphia and Newburgh. Her arrival lifted the morale of the soldiers. She brought supplies with her to camp, including clothing made by the slaves at Mount Vernon, food, and medical goods. During the day she tended to the sick and organized the other women at camp into sewing groups to repair soldier uniforms. At night, she played the hostess role at dinners and other gatherings of the officers and their wives. Mostly, Martha looked after her husband's comfort, which in turn enabled him to focus on his military duties.²⁸ By being indispensable to her husband, she was indispensable to the patriot cause. So much so that Washington, who volunteered to serve without pay so long as his expenses were reimbursed, requested that the government reimburse Martha for travel costs.²⁹

Duty Calls. Again.

When the war ended and Washington bade farewell to his troops, he hoped that he would be able to "glide gently down the stream of life in tranquil retirement."³⁰ For her part, Martha had hoped that she and George would be "left to grow old in solitude and tranquility together."³¹ And for about the next four years, that was true. He farmed, built and gardened at his beloved Mount Vernon; Martha enjoyed family life with her grandchildren; and the couple entertained the hordes of visitors that descended on Mount Vernon to visit the General and Lady Washington. Then in 1787, answering the call of duty, he left for Philadelphia where he was elected unanimously to preside over the constitutional convention. The two-term presidency followed in 1789, when they were both in their late 50s.

As they set up an operating framework for the world's first modern republican government, Washington and his cabinet established behavioral protocols which restricted private meetings with the president in favor of a formal

schedule enabling members of the public and Congress to call upon the President.³² At weekly levees, or receptions, and formal dinners, Martha served in the role of hostess, greeting visitors prior to the President's arrival. The levees continued for the eight years of the presidency. Martha understood that in her new role as the president's wife she would be closely watched. In approaching her duties, she struck a balanced tone that reflected republican principles while maintaining a dignified formality.³³ Indeed, upon meeting Martha for the first time, Abigail Adams observed that "(s)he received me with great ease and politeness. She is plain in her dress, but that plainness is the best of every article. . . . Her manners are modest and unassuming, dignified and feminine, not the tincture of hauteur about her."³⁴

Of course, Martha's main duty was to look after the comfort and needs of her husband and to help organize the presidential quarters. She did this with the assistance of a large staff of paid white and freed black servants, but also several enslaved individuals from Mount Vernon that the Washingtons brought with them, first to New York, and then to Philadelphia.³⁵ In the crowded presidential quarters, the slaves, who had been separated from their families at Mount Vernon, worked in close proximity with the paid staff, reinforcing the disparity in their positions.³⁶ In order to evade Pennsylvania emancipation laws that freed slaves after six months of residency in the state, the Washingtons rotated slaves between Mount Vernon and Philadelphia.³⁷

During their time in Philadelphia, two enslaved individuals escaped. They were Hercules, a chef, who escaped in 1797, and Martha's young personal maid, Oney Judge, who escaped in 1796. The Washingtons took out newspaper ads for their return, and agents employed by the Washingtons made unsuccessful efforts at retrieving them.³⁸ Oney Judge lived as a free person until her death in 1848. Shortly before she died, she recalled in an interview, "Whilst they were packing up to go to Virginia, I was packing to go, I didn't know where; for I knew that if I went back to Virginia, I should never get my liberty. I had friends among the colored people of Philadelphia, had my things carried there beforehand, and left Washington's house while they were eating dinner."³⁹

Martha believed she had treated Oney Judge very well and could not understand why Oney Judge had fled. The simple concept of a desire for freedom was beyond Martha's comprehension. For her part, Oney Judge claimed she had a high regard for Martha but wanted a future of freedom for herself and any children she might have.⁴⁰

32 Brady, p. 161.

33 Founding Mothers, p. xix.

34 Founding Mothers, p. 233; Brady, p. 166

35 Lindsay M. Chervinsky, "The Enslaved Household of President George Washington," retrieved at <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/the-enslaved-household-of-president-george-washington>.

36 *Id.*

37 *Id.*

38 See "Oney Judge," retrieved at <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/oney-judge>.

39 *Id.*

40 *Id.* When asked by a newspaper reporter if she had any regrets about leaving the Washingtons given the poverty and hard labor she experienced for most of her adult life, Oney Judge replied, "No, I am free, and have, I trust been made a child of God by the means." *Id.*; see also, Brady, pp. 208-209.

25 Brady, p. 95.

26 Brady, p. 111; Founding Mothers, p. 89.

27 Founding Mothers, p. 85.

28 See e.g., Brady, p. 105.

29 Brady, p. 145.

30 Brady, p. 157, quoting a 1787 letter from Washington to Robert Morris.

31 Founding Mothers, p. 237; Brady, p. 159.



Edward Savage, *West Front of Mount Vernon, c. 1796*. The Washingtons and several slaves and guests are depicted in the scene. (Image courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association).

Back to Mount Vernon

Washington's second term was difficult. It took its toll. Partisan differences emerged that destroyed old friendships and relationships. When the term ended, the Washingtons could not get back to Mount Vernon fast enough. Martha could devote herself to family, Washington to farming and the land. The parade of visitors continued, and Martha remained a gracious hostess always happy to engage with them, guide them around Mount Vernon, and discuss the history and people she and her husband had encountered during the nation's formative stages.⁴¹

⁴¹ Brady, p. 215.

The Washingtons' remaining time together at Mount Vernon was limited. On December 12, 1799, upon returning from his daily ride around the plantation, Washington fell ill with a throat infection. He lingered for a couple of days and died on December 14. "Is he gone," Martha asked. She continued: "'Tis well. All is now over. I shall soon follow him. . . . I have no more trials to pass through."⁴² That night, Martha closed the door of the second-floor bedroom that she had shared with her husband for four decades, and moved to a smaller third-floor bedroom, which she used until her death on May 22, 1802, at age 70.⁴³ In supporting her husband in a long and loving confidential relationship, with a unique and special grace⁴⁴ she had indeed invented the role of First Lady.

Abram S. Feuerstein is employed by the United States Department of Justice as an Assistant United States Trustee in the Riverside Office of the United States Trustee Program (USTP). The mission of the USTP is to protect the integrity of the nation's bankruptcy system and laws. The views expressed in the article belong solely to the author, and do not represent in any way the views of the United States Trustee, the USTP, or the United States Department of Justice.



⁴² Brady, p. 219.

⁴³ Brady, p. 219.

⁴⁴ Brady uses the word "grace" to describe the manner in which Martha conducted herself and handled the role of First Lady (Brady, p. 236), while "special grace" is the phrase used by Cokie Roberts (Founding Mothers p. xix).



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Women and the Impact of Incarceration

by Juanita E. Mantz

Per a report from the prison policy initiative in 2024, there are approximately 190,000 women and girls incarcerated in the United States. See <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2024women.html>. That same study found that statistically speaking, 84,000 women were housed in local jails nationwide and 77,000 in state prisons with the remainder in mostly federal and immigration custody. *Id.* It must be said that immigration wise, these numbers may have increased since 2024.

There is a staggering number of women incarcerated. One might ask, from a policy perspective, how we, as a society, go about reducing this? One way could be parental caretaker diversion. On October 8, 2019, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 394 into law. The bill was sponsored by Senator Skinner and allows the creation of a diversionary program for primary caretakers, as defined under the law very specifically, for misdemeanors and low-level felonies. See California Senate Bill 394. This is codified in California Penal Code section 1001.83.

This kind of diversionary programming might be the answer. The truth is, I do not need to prove that women are caregivers. We all know it to be a fact. Thus, by extension, having parental caretaker diversion program would help women. We know this. Yet, although parental caretaker diversion was passed in 2019, it is (still) not available in Riverside County. Why is that? I do not have the answer, only questions.

What I do know, however, is that the cost we pay as a society is huge.

In 2017, a study found that half of those incarcerated in the United States have children and that there are more than 1.7 million children of incarcerated parents under 18 years of age. See Smyke, A. T.; Bailey, L. O.; Zeanah, C. H. (2017). *Mental health implications for children of incarcerated parents*. *Loyola Law Review*, 63(3), 405-434.

Another organization has found that "two thirds of all women incarcerated have children." See <https://childrens-defense.org/mothers-rocking-the-prison-cradle/>. Moreover, almost 60 percent of mothers in state prisons resided with their children at the time they entered prison. *Id.*

Further, even more disturbing, is that as of 2016, 5 million children in the United States have at least one parent who is incarcerated and further, 4.5 million children enter foster care before 18 years of age. These children are typically from disadvantaged backgrounds. See Laub, J. H., & Haskins, R. (2018). *Helping Children with Parents in Prison and Children in Foster Care*. *Future of Children*, 1-6; See also Shlafer, R.J., Hardeman, RR, Carlson, EA. *Reproductive justice for incarcerated mothers and advocacy for their infants and young children*. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 2019.

Moreover, children with incarcerated parents face a plethora of problematic outcomes, including mental health

problems, delinquency, crime, and substance abuse. See Kjellstrand, J., Yu, G., Eddy, J. M., & Martinez, C. R., Jr. (2018). *Children of Incarcerated Parents: Developmental Trajectories of Externalizing Behavior across Adolescence*. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, (Issue 11).

Plus, I can tell you that, anecdotally speaking, even those women who are without children, tend to be caretakers for others such as their parents, nieces and nephews. The statistics bear this out. See <https://www.wpaonline.org/incarcerating-mothers-creates-a-family-crisis/> (finding that most women who are incarcerated or at risk of being incarcerated are primary caregivers of their children or loved ones, and their system involvement disrupts the whole family).

I guess what I am saying is that we should try and help rather than hinder these women because in the end, helping them will benefit children and families and society as a whole.

In my opinion, incarceration should be the last resort. As the attorney who is the "boots on the ground" attorney representing the women and men in our county's Incompetent to Stand Trial Diversion program, I have seen firsthand how mental health and substance abuse programming changes lives, and influences generations of families in a positive way.

Ultimately, it must be said that helping women avoid incarceration helps our society as a whole and that accordingly, treatment in a non-custodial setting should be prioritized.

Juanita E. Mantz, is a proud feminist and writer with two award winning books, Tales of an Inland Empire Girl (Pelekinesis Press, 2025, 2nd Ed.) and Portrait of a Deputy Public Defender or how I became a punk rock lawyer (Bamboo Dart Press, 2021). She has been a Riverside County Deputy Public Defender for many years and represents the PC Section 1368 population, many of whom are women.



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Judge Klatchko spent nearly a decade on the Riverside County Superior Court, where she presided over an unlimited civil department for seven years and conducted hundreds of mediations and settlement conferences. Before taking the bench, she handled and oversaw appellate matters in California and federal courts as a certified civil appellate law specialist and appellate practice leader. At JAMS, she will focus on resolving cases involving appellate, business/commercial, real estate, employment, construction, civil rights, governmental/public agency and professional liability.

[jamsadr.com/neutrals/klatchko](https://jamsadr.com/ neutrals/klatchko)



The Other Bar: Twelve Years Free

by Mark A. Easter

Two years ago, I wrote an article, "TEN YEARS GAINED," about my journey to overcome alcohol abuse. I certainly didn't think of myself as a "finished product" at that time. As one of my favorite comedians, Bill Burr, likes to say, I'm sure I still had some "scaffolding" on me. But I did think of it as a milestone that I had reached. Ten years of sobriety. Worth writing and sharing about right?

Little did I know that within just a couple of months of that article coming out, I would be in the fight of my life. A diaphragm that was apparently defective from birth finally caught up with me. My intestines were pushing my heart out of place and smothering my lungs. I couldn't sleep. I couldn't breathe. Multiple hospitals. Multiple surgeries. Multiple near-death experiences. Five months in the hospital. Then eleven weeks struggling at home. Then a third, final surgery, and another month in the hospital.

But I survived. I had amazing doctors. I was blessed to have wonderful family members there for me (especially EvanRae-hands down the greatest daughter (and nurse) on the planet). And many friends to support me. And a great firm of attorneys and staff covering for me.

"You're an inspiration." "What courage!" "Such grit!" "How did you survive that?" I heard those wonderful words often. But how did I? From a physical standpoint, it was nothing less than a miracle, and the incredible work of some fine, dedicated surgeons. As for the mental and spiritual survival part of it, I've had a lot of time to contemplate that over the past year.

In AA and the recovery group world, we talk a lot about a "higher power." I have come to believe in a higher power, a God, that I can have a relationship with and who loves me. And through all of the struggles and disappointments and threats to my life that I went through in the hospital, I came to an even greater knowledge and faith in that God's love and protection over me.

One of the gifts my higher power gave me through that difficult journey was HOPE. And the path towards that HOPE was GRATITUDE. Seeing things each day that I could be grateful for. Sometimes big things, like a transfer to a better hospital. Or a successful procedure. Or positive test results. But often times "smaller" things. A visit. A card. A Scrabble game with a friend. Being able to walk more steps than the day before. An upgrade in my approved diet. One day closer to leaving. Being grateful for those things. But the path to GRATITUDE was CLARITY. The CLARITY to be able to see those things each day that I could be grateful for. And for me, the path to CLARITY was....SOBRIETY.

Yes. SOBRIETY enables CLARITY which enables GRATITUDE which enables HOPE. Over the past year or so, I have tried to fathom how I would have endured this medical journey without SOBRIETY. I cannot. But what I can do, and have done, is continue to rejoice and celebrate that SOBRIETY. And the place in which I have done that, a place that has become a greater resource, and even more meaningful to me, these last two years, is THE OTHER BAR.

THE OTHER BAR is a fellowship of legal professionals who struggle with, or have struggled with, alcohol and/or drug abuse. THE OTHER BAR is rooted in the 12 steps principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. In my experience, the degree to which OTHER BAR attendees closely follow the 12 steps varies a great deal. The manner in which attendees perceive and rely upon their "higher power" also varies a great deal. But what we do have in common is a desire to stay sober, and a desire to have a confidential environment in which we care about each other, listen to each other, and have an opportunity to talk about things in life that really matter.

These OTHER BAR meetings have been a great place for me, over the last two years, to first and foremost, encourage others who are struggling with or new to SOBRIETY. But it has also been a place for me to celebrate how sobriety helped me survive this journey, work through the adjustment back to my professional life, and ponder what lies ahead. And if there is anything I have learned in the last two years, it is that SOBRIETY is not only important to me in terms of what I have overcome in the past; it is also vital because I don't know what lies ahead. When I wrote "TEN YEARS GAINED," little did I know what "two years more" would bring!

If anyone reading this thinks that they are struggling in this area and could use help, I encourage and welcome you to attend a meeting of THE OTHER BAR. There is currently an in-person meeting every Tuesday at noon in Riverside. There is also a ZOOM meeting every Wednesday at noon, which is attended by legal professionals from all over the State. Greg Dorst, who often gives CLE presentations on substance abuse, recovery and mental health, facilitates both meetings. He is an incredible listener, mentor, life coach, and friend.

If you would like more information on THE OTHER BAR, feel free to contact me at mark.easter@bbklaw.com.

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



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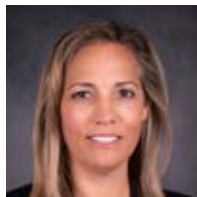
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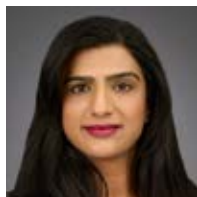


Nominees for the 2026-2027 RCBA Board of Directors



The Riverside County Bar Association's Nominating Committee has nominated the following members for the 2026-2027 RCBA Board of Directors. The term of each office begins on September 1, 2026. Below are the biographies submitted by each candidate. The election will be conducted by a web based electronic voting system. Please watch your email for voting information. Election results will be announced in June.

As President-Elect for 2025-2026, Elisabeth Lord will automatically assume the office of President for 2026-2027.



Goushia Farook

President-Elect

It is a continued honor to have been nominated to continue representing our community with a position for the Riverside County Bar Association Board of Directors. I presently serve as vice president and have previously had the privilege of serving as director-at-large for two

terms, secretary, and chief financial officer. Prior to that, I joined the board as the president of the Barristers.

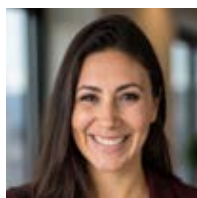
It is surreal to consider the time that has passed since I started serving our board and community. To see how the Bar has grown and the continued support of our legal community these past years has been remarkable. It would be a privilege to remain on the board and continue serving our legal community.

I have now been with Bratton & Razo for six years, practicing exclusively in the area of family law. As my twelfth year as a practicing attorney is underway, I continue to be amazed by the wonderful legal community in Riverside. The same respect, professionalism, and exemplary standards set by our legal community that made me choose Riverside as my home continue to make me proud of who we are.

We selflessly give our time to the Elves Program whether we are wrapping, shopping or delivering a season of happiness. We support our youth by volunteering as scoring attorneys, presiding over round or even coaching for mock trial. I have had the privilege of being part of the coaching team for Notre Dame High School with the Honorable Eric Keen and Honorable Kelly Moran amongst an elite group of attorneys. We step up when someone in our community needs our help. We, each individual in our legal community, are what makes the RCBA and Riverside so remarkable. A personal goal is to serve our community in the capacity of a board member to allow us to continue being a standout bar association.

I have served as past president of the RCBA Barristers. I am currently a member of and on the board of the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court. I am a member of Hispanic Bar Association of the Inland Empire and ecstatic to see the return of Asian Pacific American Lawyers of the Inland Empire. I am also a past board member for Inland Counties Legal Services.

It is with an immense amount of love and respect for our Bar Association that I would like to continue serving on the RCBA board.



Lauren M. Vogt

Vice President

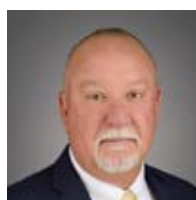
Lauren M. Vogt is a trial lawyer at Rizio Lipinsky Heiting Law Firm in Riverside where she specializes in traumatic personal injury, wrongful death, and government liability. Lauren has been active in the Riverside County Bar Association (RCBA) for many years. She previously served as

president of the Barristers, the new and young attorney organization of the RCBA. She also previously served as president of the Consumer

Attorneys of the Inland Empire (CAOIE), a plaintiff's bar seeking justice for all citizens of the Inland Empire by protecting their right to civil jury trials

She also currently sits on the RCBA Board of Directors, as well as the Riverside County Bar Foundation Board, as Chief Financial Officer. Lauren is a graduate of the RCBA's New Attorney Academy and currently volunteers her time teaching at the Academy. Lauren also currently serves as immediate past-president of the Consumer Attorneys of the Inland Empire (CAOIE), on the board of directors for the statewide organization, Consumer Attorneys of California (CAOC), and as president-elect on the Western San Bernardino County Bar Association board, where she is slated to serve as president of the organization in 2026-2027.

Additionally, she has been recognized as Super Lawyers Rising Star since 2023, Best Lawyers Ones to watch since 2022, and received the CAOIE Street Fighter of the Year award in 2024. Lauren is eager to continue her involvement with the RCBA as vice president.



Chris Jensen

Chief Financial Officer

I am a candidate for the Riverside County Bar Association (RCBA) position of chief financial officer. I have had a fulfilling career in and for the Riverside legal community. I am honored to be nominated to the RCBA officer position. I believe

I have participated in and touched a very broad spectrum of our RCBA positions and legal community involvement and would relish the opportunity to serve you one more time as a RCBA officer.

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

I joined the RCBA when I became licensed to practice. My early RCBA years, I was in awe of RCBA Presidents Jane Carney, Kurt Siedler, Sandy Leer and Ward Albert. They encouraged me to be involved and set me on my path of RCBA roles. Some of my RCBA and related highlights are: Civil Litigation section member and section chair, founding member of an organization known as Settlement Now – Inland, the precursor of RCBA Dispute Resolution Service, Inc. (DRS), RCBA ADR representative/contact to the California State Bar, RCBA delegate to the State Bar Convention, attorney member of the Riverside Superior Court Judicial ADR committee (I have had a reoccurring role on that committee to date), RCBA ADR Committee and committee co-chair, Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court. I am a founding board member of DRS; eventually chair of the board and president, and still am to this date. One of my roles with DRS has been the mediation coordinator with the Riverside Superior Court leading the fulfillment of the DRS contract with the court in providing mediations for civil, family law, and probate cases. I am also a mediator and arbitrator, RCBA Judicial Evaluation Committee member, RCBA Fee Arbitrator Panel, RCBA History Committee chair, RCBA New Attorney Academy panelist, and member of the RCBA Board of Directors.

In 2021, I was honored to be named a recipient of the E. Aurora Hughes Meritorious Award for Service, accumulating an outstanding record of service to the Riverside County Bar Association. I am grateful for that distinction but believe I still have a job to continue to earn it. RCBA being over 130 years old, is a distinguished association. It is important that we preserve and continue our important role in the legal community. Over the years, I have been impressed by the activity

and involvement by our fellow RCBA members in our legal and general community. We are looked to by state and local entities for participation and opinions, justifiably so. And I want to be part of preserving that legacy and making sure that the next generation of Riverside lawyers appreciate, improve, and continue that legacy. I hope to instill in our younger members the importance and prestige of RCBA as did Jane, Kurt, Sandy, and Ward did in me. I hope you will allow me to continue to participate in that role.



Erica Alfaro

Secretary

I am honored to announce my candidacy for the position of secretary for the Riverside County Bar Association (RCBA).

As a fourth-generation Riverside resident, I am deeply committed to serving the community where my family has deep roots and that I've always called home. I am a graduate of UC Davis, where I completed both my undergraduate studies and legal education.

Since 2015, I have been an active member of the RCBA, serving as a director-at-large, as well as president and past president of Barristers. During my tenure as Barristers president, I successfully revitalized the organization, fostering a sense of community among new attorneys and helping launch the annual Judicial Reception. Currently, as Corporate Legal Counsel at State Fund and a graduate of the Emerging Leaders Program, I am eager to bring this leadership experience to the role of secretary.

My commitment to the legal community and access to justice extends through my active involvement in several programs. I am a proud supporter of the Riverside County Bar Foundation and participate in the Elves Program every year.

Additionally, I have spent the past decade as a board member for Inland Counties Legal Services, including a term as president (2024–2026), advocating for our most vulnerable neighbors. My service as former vice president of the Hispanic Bar Association of the Inland Empire and as past member of the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court has further reinforced my dedication to our profession.

I am running for secretary because I am dedicated to our organization. My vision is to champion professionalism by creating meaningful networking opportunities and expanding community outreach while upholding our professional ideals through service.

With over ten years of proven leadership, extensive board experience, and heartfelt dedication to the RCBA, I would be honored to earn your vote for Secretary. Together, we can create impactful initiatives that go beyond the courtroom while celebrating our bar's rich legacy. Thank you for your support!



Alejandro Barraza

Secretary

Alejandro Barraza is a criminal defense and immigration attorney at Arsany and Barraza, Attorneys at Law. He handles all types of criminal defense cases, with a specialty in defending those with mental health diagnoses, veterans, and non-citizens. With respect to immigration, he has represented individuals seeking lawful status through family petitions, u-visa, special immigrant juvenile status, post-conviction relief, and defended non-citizens seeking asylum and/or other statutory relief in removal proceedings.

Alejandro grew up in Anaheim, CA. He is an avid Angels fan. Alejandro earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in criminology, law, and society from the University of California, Irvine. He earned his law degree from the University of Colorado, Boulder in 2016.

Alejandro has been an active member in the RCBA since his first days as a young attorney. He has been on multiple Barristers Boards and is currently on this year's Barristers Board. In addition, Alejandro has been on multiple Asian Pacific American Lawyers of the Inland

Empire (APALIE). Also, he is currently treasurer of the Hispanic Bar of the Inland Empire (HBAIE).

Alejandro is also involved in Riverside County Bar Foundation Project Graduate Program. Project Graduate works in collaboration with the Riverside Superior Court and Riverside County's Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) to assist foster youth to graduate high school, to continue their education beyond high school, and to plan for a successful future.

Alejandro would be honored to be the secretary of the RCBA Board of Directors.



Veronica Garcia

Director-at-Large

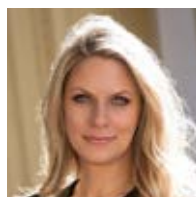
I am honored to be considered for a position on the Riverside County Bar Association's Board of Directors. I currently serve as the Housing Practice Group Director at Inland Counties Legal Services, where I oversee a dedicated team of 38 professionals, including 15 attorneys, committed

to protecting housing stability and advancing the housing rights of low-income residents across the Inland Empire. In this role, I manage litigation strategy, mentor attorneys, and collaborate with community partners to strengthen advocacy efforts on issues that directly impact Riverside County families.

My bar leadership experience reflects a longstanding commitment to uplifting and diversifying our local legal community. I am the current president—and past secretary—of the Hispanic Bar Association of the Inland Empire, where I have worked to expand mentorship opportunities and increase visibility for Latino legal professionals. I also serve as a vice president and founding member of the Pride Bar Association of the Inland Empire, an organization dedicated to supporting LGBTQIA+ attorneys and fostering a more inclusive legal profession. Additionally, I am a first-time member of the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court, where I engage with colleagues across practice areas to promote civility, ethics, and professional development.

My involvement with the RCBA has been grounded in appreciation for its role in unifying and strengthening our legal community. If elected, I hope to contribute to initiatives that expand member engagement, support newer attorneys, and enhance community-based outreach—particularly in areas where legal services remain scarce.

I would be grateful for your support and the opportunity to serve the RCBA in this next chapter.



Heather A. Green

Director-at-Large

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

facing complex legal challenges.

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

Her legal journey began early, starting as an intern with the 4th District Court of Appeals clerk and later as a clerk and courtroom assistant at the Riverside County Superior Court. This rich background has shaped her holistic approach to defense, focusing on the intersection of law and mental health.

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

Beyond the courtroom, Heather is an active member of various legal and civic organizations. She serves on the Board of Governors

for California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, the Board of Directors for Phenix Gateway, a non profit organization and in the past has served on the Board of Directors for the Riverside County Bar Association. Her leadership reflects her belief in creating a more inclusive and equitable community.

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



Christopher Moffitt

Director-at-Large

Christopher Moffitt is a partner at Best Best & Krieger LLP (BBK), where he is a member of the firm's Business and Labor & Employment practice groups. He represents public and private clients in a wide range

of litigation matters, including complex business disputes, public agency litigation, and employment law claims involving discrimination, retaliation, and harassment.

Chris has significant experience handling civil litigation matters such as breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, unfair business practices, and class actions. He works closely with clients to develop practical strategies aimed at resolving disputes efficiently, with a strong emphasis on alternative dispute resolution, including mediation and arbitration. His public agency practice includes defending cities and other governmental entities in matters involving eminent domain, regulatory enforcement, civil rights claims, and writ proceedings related to municipal policies and land use issues.

An active member of the Riverside legal community, Chris currently serves on the RCBA's Judicial Evaluation Committee, a role he has held since 2024. Through this work, he contributes to the evaluation of judicial candidates and supports the RCBA's mission of promoting excellence in the bench and bar.

Chris is also involved in the broader Riverside community. He is president of the Mary S. Roberts Pet Adoption Center and serves on the board of the Fox Riverside Theater Foundation. He also participates on the steering committees for both the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce's Leadership Riverside program and the Riverside County Office of Education's mock trial competition.

Chris has lived and practiced in Riverside for many years and would be honored to serve on the board of directors and contribute to the organization's continued growth and impact.



Sharon P. Ramirez

Director-at-Large

I am honored to be nominated for the RCBA director-at-large position for the 2026–2027 term. Since the very beginning of my legal career, the RCBA has played a pivotal role in my professional growth and sense of community. Even before I was licensed, I became involved and participated in the RCBA New Attorney Academy, where I experienced firsthand the collegial and supportive environment that defines this organization. That early connection inspired me to remain engaged and give back.

Since 2022, I have had the privilege of serving on the RCBA Barristers Board, and I currently serve as the 2025–2026 Barristers president. I also serve as treasurer for the Consumer Attorneys of the Inland Empire and as member-at-large for the Hispanic Bar Association of the Inland Empire. Through these roles, I have worked alongside dedicated friends and colleagues to support programing, foster connection, and create opportunities for attorneys and our community across our region.

In my practice as a catastrophic injury attorney at Kenny Ramirez Law Firm, I represent individuals and families facing traumatic injuries and life-altering events. This work has reinforced my commitment to service, advocacy, and community, and are values that I strive bring to my involvement with RCBA.

As someone who grew up in the Inland Empire and now practices here, this community is deeply important to me. If elected, I look forward to contributing to RCBA's continued growth and impact, and it would be a privilege to serve and give back to the legal community that has given so much to me.



Krieger Award Nominations Sought

In 1974, the RCBA established a Meritorious Service Award to recognize those lawyers or judges who have, over their lifetimes, accumulated outstanding records of community service. The award, later named for James H. Krieger, has since been presented to James Wortz, Eugene Best, Arthur Swarner, Arthur Littleworth, Justice James Ward, Fred Ryneal, John Babbage, Patrick Maloy, Ray Sullivan, Justice John Gabbert, Jane Carney, Judge Victor Miceli, Justice Manuel Ramirez, Kathleen Gonzales, Terry Bridges, James Heiting, Jack Clarke, Jr., Virginia Blumenthal, Judge Virginia Phillips, Senator Richard Roth, and John Brown.

Obviously, with just 21 honorees in 50 years, the award is not presented every year. Instead, it is given only when the extraordinary accomplishments of particularly deserving individuals come to the attention of the award committee.

The award committee is now soliciting nominations for the award. Those eligible to be considered for the award must be (1) lawyers, inactive lawyers, judicial officers, or former judicial officers (2) who either are currently practicing or sitting in Riverside County, or have in the past practiced or sat in Riverside County, and (3) who, over their lifetime, have accumulated an outstanding record of community service or community achievement. That service may be limited to the legal community, but must not be limited to the RCBA.

Current members of the RCBA board of directors are not eligible. Nor are the current members of the award committee: Judge Irma Asberry, Virginia Blumenthal, Judge David Bristow (Chair), Judge Sophia Choi, Paul Grech, Jim Heiting, Robyn Lewis and Craig Marshall.

If you would like to have anyone considered for this most prestigious of RCBA awards, please submit a nomination to the RCBA office not later than July 1. The nomination should be in writing and should contain, at a minimum, the name of the nominee and a description of his or her record of community service or accomplishments. The identities of both the nominees and their nominators shall remain strictly confidential.



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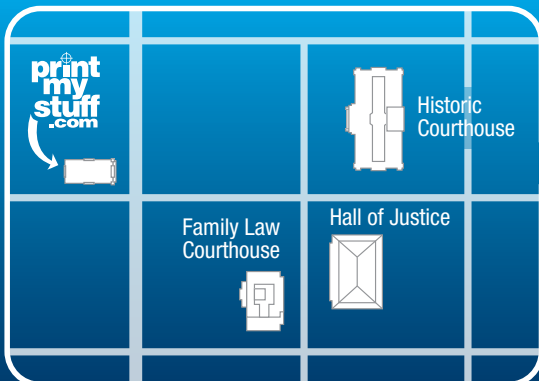
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1st Floor of Professional Office Building, 2 private offices and staff workspace sized for 2-3 members. Includes 2 bathrooms, break room/storage area. Furnished reception and conference room (shared). Approx 1,575 gross sq.ft. Easy walk to Court. Parking included. Call Lucy at (951) 686-1584.

Seeking a Family Law Attorney

Redlands firm is seeking a family law attorney. A minimum of three years' experience is required. The ideal associate should have experience in all facets of family law. The candidate should possess strong legal research and writing skills. Please send your resume to: lholmer@michaelyounglaw.com.

Conference Rooms Available - RCBA Building

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

Part-Time Bookkeeper Position

RCBA is seeking a part-time bookkeeper. Interested candidates are invited to submit their resumes to Charlene Nelson at charlene@riversidecountybar.com.

Lawyer Referral Service Intake Counselor

RCBA is seeking a full-time intake counselor for the Lawyer Referral Service. Interested candidates are invited to submit their resumes to Charlene Nelson at charlene@riverside-countybar.com.



The following persons have applied for membership in the Riverside County Bar Association. If there are no objections, they will become members effective May 30, 2026.

John Charles Davidson – Law Office of John Charles Davidson, Temecula

Luz Evelyn Essenwanger – Sole Practitioner, Redlands
Maya Gortarez – Riverside County Public Defender's Office, Riverside

Maureen D. Gregory – Law Office of Maureen Gregory APC, San Diego

Jeremiah D. Johnson – Corona City Attorney's Office, Corona

Michelle Paradise – County of Riverside Executive Office, Riverside

Vincent M. Sbardella – Winet Patrick Creighton & Hanes, Riverside

Alec J. Sperduto – Inland Counties Legal Services, Riverside

Courtney N. Williams – U.S. Attorney's Office, Riverside



INLAND COUNTIES JUDICIAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

This program was developed to assist all attorneys applying, or interested in applying, for a Superior Court judicial position. The program will assist in the development of a qualified and more diverse judicial applicant pool. This program is designed to identify, encourage, and provide mentors for all individuals considering a judicial career. One primary goal of the program is to convey to the legal community the uniform message of Governor Newsom's commitment to appointing a highly capable bench reflective of the rich diversity of our state.

To apply to the program, fill out the Judicial Mentor application at:

<https://forms.riverside.courts.ca.gov/Forms/JudicialMentorApplication>

For additional information, go to Riverside Superior Court website or email: JudicialMentor@riverside.courts.ca.gov

CALENDAR

MAY

- 7** Appellate Law Section
Noon, Zoom
Speaker: John Lanahan
Topic: "Plead, OK; Appeal, Maybe"
MCLE
- APALIE Installation Dinner
5:30 - 8:00 PM
Citrus State Historic Park
- 11** Roundtable with Judge Hopp
12:15 PM, Zoom
MCLE
- 13** Criminal Law Section Meeting
Noon, Zoom
Speaker: Souley Diallo
Topic: "The Fundamentals of Jury Selection in Criminal Cases"
MCLE
- 15** General Membership Meeting
Noon, RCBA Gabbert Gallery
Speakers: Brooke E. Jimenez, David E. Robinett, David Rivera
Topic: "Recent Supreme Court Decisions in *Mahmoud v. Taylor* and *Mirabelli v. Bonta*."
MCLE
- 19** Family Law Section Meeting
Noon, RCBA Gabbert Gallery
Speakers: Judge Vineyard, Commissioner Forsse, and others to be added
Topic: "Townhall with the Riverside County Family Law Bench"
MCLE
- 20** Estate Planning, Probate & Elder Law Section
Noon, RCBA Gabbert Gallery
Speaker: Jennifer Fejzic
Topic: "Working in Collaboration with a Professional Fiduciary"
MCLE
- 26** Juvenile Law Section Meeting
12:15, Zoom
Speaker: Judge Jack Lucky (Ret.)
Topic: TBA
MCLE - 1 hour Technology

Events Subject To Change

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

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.

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

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



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