



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

CHRISTINA M. ZABAT-FRAN

For the Love of Long Tables

“May all who come as guests, leave as friends.”

~ Unknown

I'd rather build a longer table than a higher fence.

My parents always said this to me growing up. Anyone who shows up at the door, no matter the hour or occasion, is always welcome. Quite literally, we will get to the kitchen, rearrange some things, extend the table, and find more chairs.

And really, to me, it is one of the greatest pleasures in life to set the table. Is there any better way to make someone feel welcome? I grew up in a family where hosting was on par with academics, and a B- (or B+, for that matter!) would not suffice in either case. All sportsmanship aside, it's my utmost priority to make sure each guest feels taken care of. Let's get together, spend some good time, and have some fun.

Looking back, I realize how lucky I was in my formidable days at UC Irvine School of Law to find such a kindred spirit in dear friend, unmatched host, and roommate, Tommy McClain. Tommy, who is now an impactful leader in the Citywide Food Access Team for San Francisco, was then and is now one of the most kind, warm, and welcoming human beings I know. In the same vein where I have shared with you my love for the Filipino spirit of *Bayanihan*, Tommy fervently embodies the Hawaiian essence of *Aloha*.

Over giant pots of homemade chili and what seemed an everlasting, delectable spread, we exchanged family stories and future dreams as soon-to-be-lawyers, fueled each other's ambitions, and welcomed friends to our humble digs. I am so grateful for those moments.

We have countless memories from those years. We also have one shared tradition that continues to this day – every June 12th, we call to wish each other Happy Loving Day. In fact, it was thanks to Tommy that I learned about the seminal U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Loving v. Virginia*.

This landmark civil rights decision declared prohibitions on interracial marriage unconstitutional across the nation. For Tommy and me, as proud products of interracial marriages ourselves, this could not have hit more deeply or felt more relevant. To think that fewer than sixty years ago my parents would not have been able to marry is beyond belief.

All I know is, I wouldn't be who I am without my parents.

I have found that each year, Loving Day offers a point of entry for a deeper conversation on multicultural identity, civil rights, inclusion, equal protection, and our society. And while inclusion and equality is an ongoing journey for us all, I am forever inspired to keep moving forward by the individual stories I hear, my dear law school roommate, and of course, my parents.

In a similar spirit, I am thrilled that this month's *Orange County Lawyer* is bringing a spotlight to the OCBA's own Affiliate Bars. It is through these incredible organizations that we are able to extend our arms as a profession and include so many into the fold. Talk about one long table!

I applaud the tremendous work the leaders of our Affiliate Bars take on to serve and enhance our community. I've found it is one of the most rewarding aspects serving as president to partner with, support, and be the biggest cheerleader I can be for our Affiliate Bars.

If you are looking to pull up a chair or simply for a seat at the table in our wonderful legal community, look no further than getting involved in our Affiliate Bars.

And as is Tommy's and my tradition—wishing you all a Happy Loving Day.

Christina M. Zabat-Fran, the 2024 President of the OCBA, is excited for upcoming special events with our Affiliate Bars, including the OCBA Summer Social on June 6th. Will she see you there? Her email is christina.zabat@lanvin-group.com.



Zabat-Fran with fellow Ant eater, Tommy McClain.



OCBA President Christina Zabat-Fran with her parents, Deo and Valerie Zabat-Fran, at the UC Irvine School of Law Inaugural Class Graduation in 2012.