



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

CHRISTINA M. ZABAT-FRAN

It's On Brand

“Confidence. If you have it, you can make anything look good.”

~ Diane von Furstenberg

Working hard and believing in yourself never go out of style.

To me, this is the throughline in a world where what we wear as lawyers has changed a lot over the past few years. Sure, sometimes we wear ties, sometimes we don't. But that's not really the point.

Fashion is no doubt a powerful tool to express yourself. Whatever dressing for success means to you, make sure to dress for yourself, and consider it just one of the many ways you can build and share your personal brand.

In my own experience of counseling global brands for over fifteen years, I have seen the impact that great attentiveness to branding can have not only on the business and the bottom line, but on expressing a value proposition that can last for decades. Whether for a global company or for yourself, a well-defined brand establishes credibility and trust.

A strong personal brand can help you attract the right people, land a job or promotion, and make connections that lead to new opportunities. With reflection and intentional actions, you can gain confidence in your personal value and project it in your life and career.

As lawyers, our personal brand is what we are known for with our colleagues and clients and in our community. Being “on brand” means choosing things that align with our energy and our values. How you show up matters, and what you show up for matters, too.

A recent trip really brought this home for me. Last month, I had the privilege to attend the National Conference of Bar Presidents in Chicago, an annual meeting gathering past, present, and future bar presidents from across the country. As you can imagine, to say this is an impressive group would be an understatement. It was inspiring to connect with so many others who are passionate about the future and longevity of our profession.

I was proud to represent us and introduce myself as being from the Orange County Bar Association. I have to say, I was even more proud by the responses I received. It was in those moments that I felt deeply the strength of our bar. In this nationwide audience of bar leaders, the OCBA is known as a real leader of the pack, forward thinking with programs, thoughtful in policy and governance, exemplary in its collaborative relationships with the bench and in the community. This should come as no surprise, as we all know this community is one of the most impactful places to practice in the nation.

I am reminded of the sentiment I shared at the very beginning of this year: Tell me you're a member of the OCBA, and I'll tell you who you are.

For me, bar service has undoubtedly shaped what my personal brand is today. In the workplace, I am known as a leader and a consensus builder. Amongst my peers, I am known as a connector and as someone who makes them feel included. And with rising professionals, I am known to be encouraging and accessible. I am grateful for the opportunities I have had in our OC community to define how I am as a leader and how I can serve others, and I want the same for you.

As I look ahead to the fall season, I can't help but begin to plan outfits for upcoming events (consider it a hazard of the day job). More importantly, I look forward to continuing to develop ways the OCBA can support each of you.

Let your involvement in the Orange County Bar Association be a testament of your leadership, professional excellence, and your style. Trust me—it's definitely on brand.

Christina M. Zabat-Fran, the 2024 President of the OCBA, serves as General Counsel and a corporate executive for a global luxury fashion group. When it comes to what to wear, she recommends business attire – but make it fashion! Her email is christina.zabat@lanvin-group.com.

A frame-worthy reminder from a fortune cookie Zabat-Fran opened during one of her many meals with friends at UCI Law.

Be yourself, and you will always be in fashion.
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OCBA takes Chi-town! OCBA President Christina Zabat-Fran with CEO/Executive Director Dennis Slaughter, President-Elect Mei Tsang, and Past President Nikki Miliband at the National Conference of Bar Presidents.



Zabat-Fran with OCBA Board member Kelly Galligan, celebrating Galligan being named a “Top 40 Lawyer On The Rise” by the American Bar Association while in Chicago.