



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

CHRISTINA M. ZABAT-FRAN

Earn Your Ph.D.

As I've shared with you throughout this year, I'm from a big Filipino family, where we live out loud, never show up empty handed, and always have room for more.

My father had many maxims for us growing up. I'm sure many of you can relate. One in particular is top of mind for me every day these days. He would say to me in no uncertain terms:

Always remember: work very hard, believe in yourself, and make sure to earn your Ph.D.

I know what you're thinking. What my father really means when he says earn your Ph.D. is to Preserve Human Dignity, every single day.

Growing up, I knew to be kind. As I got older, I knew to be caring and empathetic. When I got to college, I learned to understand different points of view. I got into the workforce and I learned to see my role and everyone else's role as part of the bigger picture.

And then I got to law school, and that's when I learned - like many of you - what a remarkable role it is to be a lawyer, where every day, we, in our world, preserve human dignity as great advocates and also strong stewards for our clients.

I've been thinking about this a lot lately as I witness the temperatures rise in more ways than one. And it just seems like these days as a lawyer, being an advocate and a steward, all of that good work is not enough. It's not enough to earn our J.D.s—or even our Ph.D.s—every day.

Today, more than ever, we need to be engaged in our community. We need to be leaders and lead by example.

How can we do that, successfully? Well, I'm reminded back to another maxim of my father: a key to success is to be in good company. If you surround yourself with people who are kind, intelligent, compassionate, inventive, and ambitious, you will not only feel encouraged to strive for great things yourself, you will become these things yourself.

Speaking of good company, it is with great pride that I welcome the Filipino-American Lawyers of Orange County (FLOC) as the newest Affiliate Bar of the Orange County Bar Association. Established in 2016, FLOC has become an integral and impactful part of our OC legal community, bringing great energy, heart and leadership to our profession. As a founding board member of FLOC, I am thrilled to celebrate and support a community so well known and loved for its inclusiveness, loyalty, and generosity. How fitting that this month also happens to be Filipino American History Month.

The FLOC Annual Gala is on October 4 this year, and I look forward to seeing many of you there. Mabuhay! (This means "viva!" or "cheers!" in Tagalog.)

On the theme of reflecting on heritage, I would be remiss if I did not also share with you that I'm also from a big Canadian family.

Again, I know what you're thinking. Canadian *and* Filipino, how nice can one get?

It's true, a gene stack like this just isn't playing fair, but this is how I see it: these days, being nice is the real superpower. It means being relentlessly optimistic, extraordinarily generous, and always full of love.

Does this resonate with you, too? Whether you are Filipino or Canadian by heritage, or Filipino or Canadian in your heart and soul, I welcome you to join me. Here in Orange County, we have an extraordinary legal community, and you are most definitely in good company.

As we move forward, just remember: Let's be nice, be leaders, and always earn our Ph.D.s. 📖

Christina M. Zabat-Fran, is the first Filipino-American President and second Asian-American President of the OCBA in its 120-year plus history. Given her dual citizenship with the Great White North, she may also be the first Canadian OCBA President, eh? Her email is christina.zabat@lanvin-group.com.



OCBA President Christina Zabat-Fran, 1) with her Filipino family, 2) at the FLOC Annual Gala, and 3) with her extended Filipino FLOC family at the Hon. Bryan Clavecilla's enrobing ceremony earlier this year.

