



**PRESIDENT'S PAGE**  
CHRISTINA M. ZABAT-FRAN

# A Folder of Wins

*Optimism is sustainable. If you can find something to be grateful for, then you find something to look forward to and you carry on. With gratitude, optimism is sustainable.*

~ Michael J. Fox

As we approach what is arguably my favorite season of the year, I can't help but find myself reflecting on the incredible power of gratitude and optimism.

Well, in my time as President of the Orange County Bar Association, I've had the privilege of witnessing this truth firsthand. Our legal community is made up of individuals who face immense challenges daily, whether it's advocating for justice, supporting their clients through difficult times, or balancing the weight of professional responsibilities with personal life.

Yet, despite these challenges, I've seen gratitude and optimism thrive within our membership. It's in the way we show up for each other—offering mentorship, guidance, or simply a listening ear. It's in our commitment to bettering our community and pushing forward, no matter the obstacles.

Like so many of you, I'm not one to reserve giving thanks to one month or season alone; like law, gratitude is a practice. In fact, in every meeting I lead, I make it a point to celebrate wins, both professional and personal. (And yes, celebrating another turn around the sun is most definitely a win.)

At our OCBA Board of Directors meetings, this running agenda item has become a tradition of sorts, providing moments of connection, offering a little levity at times, and overall giving context to our fellow hard-working leaders who are all volunteering their time and talent for the betterment of our bar. I am so grateful to our Board members for how they show up and cheer for each other.

Now, gratitude isn't just about recognizing the big wins; it's also about appreciating the everyday moments—the trust of a client, the support of a colleague, or the joy of a small victory in the courtroom.

When we recognize these everyday gifts, optimism flows naturally—and with it, resilience. Just what we need to carry on in such a demanding profession! They remind us that even on the toughest days, there's always something to be thankful for, and something to look forward to.

In fact, I want to encourage you to take one step further in your own gratitude practice – take time to thank yourself. That's right, show yourself a little gratitude for the everyday moments when you step up, give back, and take good care of you.


Whenever I have the opportunity to speak with law students and rising attorneys, I propose that they create a personal Folder of Wins. Got a kudos from the boss? Send it to the win folder. A letter of thanks from a client? Win folder. Close a deal, solve a problem, made someone smile? Note to self in the win folder.

Now, the next step is very important: visit your Folder of Wins regularly. Time flies—this year has certainly gone by so fast—and with it, you may forget how truly awesome you are.

When I visit my own Folder of Wins, I get to read a story of my own resilience. I'm reminded of my strength and how far I've come. And invariably, I am deeply warmed with gratitude for the many mentors, friends, and colleagues who have helped me become the lawyer and leader I am today.

As we step into this season of thanks, I'm especially grateful for the dedication and camaraderie of each of you.

This year, I've been inspired by the strength of our community, and the way we come together to support one another. Whether through our pro bono work, our volunteer efforts, or simply by showing up with a smile, we continue to move forward as a collective.

Let's carry this spirit of gratitude with us, not just as a reflection of the season, but as a daily practice. With gratitude in our hearts, optimism becomes sustainable. And with optimism, we can navigate any challenge, knowing that brighter days are always ahead. 

*Christina M. Zabat-Fran, the 2024 President of the OCBA, is overwhelmed with the heartwarming and positive feedback for how much you have loved this column this year. She has added it all to her personal Folder of Wins. Her email is [christina.zabat@lanvin-group.com](mailto:christina.zabat@lanvin-group.com).*



OCBA President Christina Zabat-Fran with the OCBA Board of Directors, debating over some serious business.



Zabat-Fran with this year's OCBA Affiliate Bar Leaders, getting ready for some serious fun.