



## PRESIDENT'S PAGE

CHRISTINA M. ZABAT-FRAN

# The Art of Leadership

As I approach the end of my term as President of the Orange County Bar Association, I can't help but find myself reflecting on the path that has brought me here and the lessons that have guided me along the way.

Leading this community has been one of the great privileges of my career, but I've come to believe that effective leadership is not solely defined by titles or milestones alone. It's shaped by the ability to embrace the fullness of who we are, to pursue interests and passions that enrich our lives beyond the profession, and to bring that perspective back into the work we do.

For me, that journey includes the time I spend in my art studio. Painting is so much more than a pastime; it's a practice that challenges me, grounds me, and gives me fresh insights that I carry into my role as a lawyer and a leader.

Now, just as art requires a balance of vision and discipline, so too does leadership. By embracing creativity, empathy, and resilience, we can serve our communities—and our organizations—with a depth that goes far beyond professional expertise.

Throughout my own career, I've always aimed to embody a Renaissance spirit, believing that true leadership requires us to be not only skilled in our profession but also curious, creative, and willing to step beyond our comfort zones.

This is no more apparent than in my studio, which regularly overflows with collected tricks and tools, and where works in progress abound.

I've learned patience through the process of trial and error, resilience in working through challenges, and the importance of perspective—seeing each piece from multiple angles and embracing both the big picture and the finer details.

This practice of balancing multiple passions has reinforced my belief that leadership is about more than mastering one skill set or completing any one masterpiece. It's about continually expanding our minds, understanding ourselves more fully, and bringing that depth into every role we undertake. By nurturing these qualities, I've found that I can approach challenges with a clearer mind and a more open heart, whether I'm advocating for clients, guiding a team, or serving this community.

What lights you up? What makes you smile? I encourage each of you to lean into the things that make you whole. Pursue the passions that bring you joy and insight. These pursuits are not distractions; they are sources of strength that help us better serve our clients, communities, and colleagues. When we invest in our own growth, we contribute to the world with a richness that extends beyond any one role.

As I step down from my role as president, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the OCBA community here. Serving alongside such dedicated, talented individuals has been a profound honor. I'm continually inspired by the way each of you shows up for one another, advancing our profession and supporting our community with integrity and passion.

I am confident that the bar is in excellent hands, ready to continue its legacy of leadership and service. But I hope that my time here has shown that being a thoughtful leader—and a whole person—means embracing all parts of ourselves, cultivating the invaluable skills and perspectives that allow us to contribute meaningfully in everything we do. And of course, I hope to remind everyone that in order to be the very best we can be, and to help a lot of people, we need to make sure we're having a lot of fun.

To each of you, I just want you to know, wholeheartedly: you've got this.

About this journey of growth we are all on? Let's keep going. Lean into your passions, explore new interests, and enjoy the utter awesomeness that is being you in pursuit of a beautiful, balanced, fulfilling life. In doing so, I can assure you that you'll find not only renewed energy and resilience, but also the depth and insight that make for truly impactful leadership.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this journey with you. I look forward to seeing how each of you, and the OCBA, continue to thrive.



*Christina M. Zabat-Fran, the 2024 President of the OCBA, is grateful for the privilege of sharing this journey with you in what has been a remarkable year. As she embraces what's next, she carries forward the inspiration and support of this incredible community. Her email is [christina.zabat@lanvin-group.com](mailto:christina.zabat@lanvin-group.com).*



OCBA President Christina Zabat-Fran, at home in her studio.