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Welcome 2017 KCBA President Jim Yoro

The President's Message

Focusing on service

by Jim Yoro

Before I begin my *President's Message*, I would first like to thank and acknowledge all of those who attended the recent KCBA Installation Dinner to honor the incoming officers, Board, and section chairpersons for 2017. I owe a debt of gratitude to Bonnie Thomson and her hard-working staff for making this another special and successful event. As always, I and the rest of the Executive Officers and Board would not be able to fulfill our duties and obligations to the KCBA without the generous support and encouragement from our families and colleagues. Thank you one and all.

As I thought about how I would approach my term as President this year, I reflected on the message that Isaac St. Lawrence delivered at his installation last year, which focused on stewardship. Of course, the key to being a successful steward to any organization is promoting and protecting its continuity and integrity. As Benjamin Disraeli once said, "The secret to success is constancy to purpose." Therefore, I thought this would be an opportune time to state the purpose of the KCBA.

"The Kern County Bar Association provides leadership in advancing the professional interests of the membership and serving the legal interests of the community.

Our goals are to:

- I. Promote professional development and improve participation by all members.
- II. Foster cooperation and goodwill between the legal profession and the community, and disseminate information to the public.
- III. Build and maintain programs to ensure financial stability.
- IV. Facilitate the use of technology in the practice.

Accomplishing these goals however, requires not just dedication to purpose but commitment to service. In order to highlight this distinction, I am reminded of the punchline to the following joke: "How would you characterize the contribution of a pig and a chicken to a breakfast of ham and eggs?" Answer: "The chicken is dedicated, the pig is committed." In other words, in order to successfully accomplish our purpose we must give of ourselves.

That is why I have chosen "Service" as the theme of my presidency. Without this selfless commitment to service from all of the people involved with the KCBA, we would not be able to successfully accomplish our purpose. But

in a broader sense, I am not emphasizing nor asking for a commitment from our members to serve just the KCBA, I am asking for a commitment to serve the profession and our community at large. Whether this means providing pro bono services, volunteering to engage in community service activities

that are law related or even those activities that may not be law related, such as food drives, providing support to schools and nonprofit organizations, helping out at the homeless center, or countless other opportunities that individual members may wish to participate in that enhance the stature of our profession in the eyes of the public, I would encourage all members to engage in any of these activities. As I said in my installation dinner speech: "Find your cause and have an effect and you will find personal enrichment from having done so; because, as St. Francis once said, 'It is in giving that we receive.'"

On another note, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Judge Robert Tafoya and the newest section of the Kern County Bar Association, the Multicultural Bar Alliance, for putting together a special event that will promote, encourage and celebrate the collaborative efforts of the Kern County Bar Association and multiple local programs that promote responsible citizenship and encourage local youth to consider law as a career. The event is called, "Building Legal Dreams and Careers." I encourage all members to attend this important event as it will bring together members of the legal profession with members of the educational community in order to foster a partnership that will benefit our local youth and the future of our profession. The event will be held on February 9, 2017 at the Westchester Hall located in 2801 F St., commencing at 5:30 p.m. I hope to see as many of you as can attend.



Welcome president Yoro

James A. Yoro installed as KCBA president January 19

by Carli Yoro and Kelsey Yoro-Bacay

Jim Yoro has led a life that many would define as “The American Dream.” Jim was born in Manila, Philippines to Juliana and Cesario Yoro, a Filipino World War II veteran who served in the United States Army. Jim spent the first four years of his life living in the boarding house his parents ran for medical students attending the University of Santo Tomas, one of the oldest colleges in Asia. At four, he immigrated to the United States as a U.S. Citizen, with his mother, after his father had established himself in the then-small, rural community of Bakersfield, California.

Jim had a traditional Catholic upbringing, attending St. Francis elementary and middle school, and Garces Memorial High School. He served as an altar boy at St. Francis church from the ages of 10 to 15. While attending Garces, a teacher suggested Jim take part in the school’s mock trial exercises and Jim became enamored with the process. After graduating from Garces, he attended Bakersfield College for one year and then transferred to the University of California, Berkeley. In 1975, he graduated *cum laude* with a degree in political science and economics. Having fallen in love with the Bay Area and still interested in law, he obtained his J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law, then known as Boalt Hall.

Upon graduation, Jim fulfilled a promise to his mother to return to Bakersfield and serve his community as a lawyer at Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance, a non-profit legal aid. His first trial as a young attorney was a class action civil rights case in which Jim represented African American teenagers who had been kicked out of a local dance unfairly. After three years of practicing at GBLA, Jim joined a thriving local firm then known as Chain, Younger, Jameson, Lemucchi, Noriega, Cohn and Stiles. After handling a family law, criminal defense, and personal injury caseload, he found his stride as a worker’s compensation attorney and is now a Bar Certified Specialist in Workers’ Compensation law.

Jim continues to serve the greater Bakersfield community



in several different capacities. Jim is currently a senior partner with the same firm, Chain, Cohn, and Stiles, where he has practiced law for over 30 years. Still devoted to his non-profit roots, Jim has served as the Chairman of the Board of GBLA and is currently on its Board of Directors. He is also on the board of the California Applicant’s Attorneys Association, a statewide organization of Workers’ Compensation Attorneys dedicated to advancing the interests of injured workers throughout the state. Jim has also been a past Board member for Kern Regional Center.

For the last six years, Jim has had the privilege of serving the KCBA in a number of positions where he has been on various *ad hoc* committees and represented KCBA as a delegate at the 2012 CCBA Conference of Delegates. Throughout his successful career, Jim has tried and won cases at the Superior, Appellate, and Supreme Court levels in California. Jim is honored to continue his service to KCBA and the greater Bakersfield legal community in the office of President.

As President, Jim hopes to promote the same value of service to the community that originally inspired him to pursue law. Jim would like to encourage all members of the Bar association to do their part to contribute to the community, whether that’s through pro bono work, volunteering for local mock trial competitions, or participating in local non-profit activities. Throughout Jim’s legal career, he has constantly been reminded that a life without cause is a life without effect and hopes to spread this message during his presidency.

Jim has been married to his lovely wife Reverie for 37 years and they have two wonderful daughters. Their eldest daughter Kelsey is an immigration attorney in Sacramento and recently married a young Central Valley doctor. Their youngest daughter Carli just graduated from her dad’s alma mater UC Berkeley and is working as an energy efficiency consultant for an Oakland-based environmental company. When Jim has free time, he enjoys attending sports events, swimming, running with his dog, taking trips to the central coast with his wife, visiting Northern California to spend time with his daughters, and kicking his new son-in-law’s butt in fantasy football.