



From the President  
**Aaron Hicks**  
 HICKS LAW FIRM

## OCTLA charts the course for a successful year

SELECTS JESSIE REES FOUNDATION, ALSO KNOWN AS “NEVER EVER GIVE UP,” TO SUPPORT CHILDREN BATTLING CANCER

Our 2025 OCTLA officers and board of directors recently gathered in beautiful Coronado on San Diego Bay for our annual strategic planning meeting – a pivotal weekend dedicated to shaping the year ahead. This essential retreat not only allowed us to map out key initiatives and our overall calendar but also reaffirmed our commitment to increasing membership, enhancing diversity, and bridging the gap between seasoned legal professionals and the emerging voices in our field. By fostering an environment where experienced trial lawyers and younger attorneys collaborate, we aim to build a stronger, more unified community that advances justice and innovation.

In addition to strategic discussions, the 11 OCTLA committees presented their reports, outlining key goals and initiatives for the year ahead. These committees play a crucial role in shaping OCTLA's impact, from legislative advocacy and education programs to networking events and community outreach. Each committee's vision ensures that our organization remains at the forefront of supporting trial lawyers, protecting consumer rights, and giving back to the community.

One of the most significant decisions made during the weekend was selecting the non-profit organization that OCTLA will support for the year. This year, we are proud to partner with the Jessie Rees Foundation, also known as NEGU (Never Ever Give Up). The foundation is dedicated to bringing hope, joy, and encouragement to children battling cancer and was inspired by Jessie Rees – a young girl who fought cancer with grace and spread positivity through her now famous “JoyJars,” brightly colored containers filled with uplifting gifts for children in hospitals. Through this partnership, OCTLA is honored to support NEGU's mission of spreading hope and smiles to children and their families during their toughest battles.

### Monthly CLE events

OCTLA remains committed to our monthly Continuing Legal Education (CLE)

events. On the fourth Thursday of most months, we offer educational events led by prominent attorneys, judges, and other professionals. Prior to the educational event, a dedicated networking hour and dinner give members the opportunity to connect, share ideas, and build relationships in a relaxed setting – further enhancing our commitment to professional growth and collaboration. These sessions provide invaluable insights and training, ensuring our members stay at the forefront of legal excellence. Our CLE programs are designed to equip trial lawyers with the knowledge and skills needed to advocate effectively and achieve justice for their clients.

We are also excited to announce a *new location for our monthly meetings!* Going forward, our gatherings will take place at The Park Club in Costa Mesa. This premier venue offers a sophisticated and welcoming atmosphere, providing the perfect setting for our members to connect, join forces, and engage in meaningful discussions.

### Justice Day in Sacramento, May 14

We encourage all OCTLA members to mark their calendars for the Annual CAOC Justice Day in Sacramento on May 14, 2025. This important event offers a powerful platform for legal professionals to unite, advocate for justice, and engage with key decision-makers shaping the future of trial law. In addition, OCTLA will be hosting our Night at the Capitol mixer, and we're excited to co-sponsor this year with Capitol City Trial Lawyers at Cafeteria 15L.

Looking ahead, we invite you to join us for our annual Palm Springs Seminar, scheduled for May 2nd to May 3rd, 2025, at the luxurious Omni Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa in Rancho Mirage. In partnership with CAOC and CAOIE, this dynamic event brings together top trial lawyers and industry experts for an immersive weekend of networking, education, and thoughtful leadership. Attendees will benefit from insightful

seminars and workshops, all designed to foster innovation and professional growth in today's evolving legal landscape.

### Golf tournament

Adding to our robust calendar, our annual golf tournament will take place on June 6, 2025, at the Oak Creek Golf Course in Irvine. This much-anticipated event offers members a chance to enjoy a day on the fairways, sharpen their skills, and network in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. Beyond the sport, the tournament is an excellent opportunity to support our organizational initiatives while enjoying a day on the course with great company.

### Top Gun Awards

One of the biggest opportunities to support NEGU this year will be at our annual TOP GUN Trial Lawyer of the Year Awards Gala & Silent Auction, scheduled for November 22, 2025. This signature event not only honors outstanding trial lawyers but also serves as a major fundraising effort for our selected charity. We hope to raise significant funds to help NEGU continue its incredible work, bringing joy and encouragement to children fighting cancer. With the generosity and support of our members and the legal community, we look forward to making a meaningful impact through this year's efforts.

With every initiative and event, we truly embody the spirit of “Stronger Together.” As we unite our expertise, passion, and commitment to justice, we recognize that our collective strength drives us to overcome challenges, innovate solutions, and create lasting change. Whether through educational seminars, community events, or strategic partnerships, each member's contribution is a vital part of our shared success. Together, we are not just an organization – we are a powerful force for transformation, inspiring one another and leaving a legacy of excellence for the future of trial lawyers.