

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2024 Was a Year of Professional and Personal Growth

Passing the Baton

By David Rosen



David Rosen

*“Such a long, long time to be gone,
and a short time to be there.”*

I don't feel like I can properly close out the year without a reference to the Grateful Dead. The above lyrics from “Box of Rain,” sung by the recently departed Phil Lesh, certainly ring true for me in this moment.

As we come to the end of 2024, I'm honored to have served as your president during a time that has called on us all to adapt, evolve and envision new paths forward for our profession. I have endeavored to frame this role as akin to running a relay race, carrying the baton for what truly is a short period of time, building on the work of those who came before us, and passing it on to serve as a foundation for those that come after.

This year, I've been privileged to see our collective efforts create a legacy that speaks to our shared values of service, justice and well-being. I am humbled to have had the opportunity to run my part of this race, building on the efforts of a lineage of leaders who have left a lasting imprint on our work.

As I write this President's Message in the middle of the fourth quarter, I feel like a runner in the final stretch of a race — focused, driven and fully committed to finishing strong. The year has brought unique challenges and incredible progress, and looking back allows me to appreciate the strides we've made together. It's been a year of collaboration, growth and renewed vision for the bar, and I am both proud and grateful to have been part of it.

I have immense gratitude to the members of the Board of Governors, who have tirelessly guided and supported our collective mission. My appreciation also extends to every past and future president of the bar for the last decade, whose counsel and encouragement have been invaluable. These individuals have helped me stay grounded, serving as reminders of the collective responsibility we hold and of the teamwork essential to progress. As I look toward the future of the OSB, I am overjoyed that this work will continue to flourish in the capable hands of Myah Kehoe who will soon take this baton.

Progress on Key Initiatives

At the start of this year, my goal was clear: to continue the bar's critical work in access to justice (ATJ), diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and lawyer well-being (LWB). Equally important was to show how these three areas are inextricably interconnected.

Access to justice remains elusive for many Oregonians, but when we integrate a DEI lens into our approach and prioritize the well-being of those working to close the justice gap, we create a sustainable, holistic framework that strengthens the entire legal ecosystem. Each initiative feeds into and supports the others, ensuring that our progress is inclusive, impactful and enduring.

Bar Highlights

The Oregon State Bar has undertaken significant projects this year to advance these key initiatives.

- **Access to Justice (ATJ):** Our work on the Oregon Law Help portal has set new standards for providing accessible, user-friendly resources for underserved communities. The launch of the Supervised Practice Portfolio Examination (SPPE) will make admission to the bar accessible to more law school graduates while assuring a rigorous examination of competency. Looking ahead, the comprehensive ATJ gap analysis now underway will further identify where the greatest deficits are and refine our strategies to ensure our ATJ efforts are reaching those most in need.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):** This year marked the creation of a strategic planning workgroup that is now actively applying both a DEI and LWB lens to all of our strategic planning. By examining our policies and practices with an eye toward DEI, we are dismantling barriers to foster a more inclusive legal community. We also expanded our Loan Repayment Assistance Program to include rural practice as a criteria and re-imagined the OSB Leadership Institute to cultivate a new generation of leaders within the profession.
- **Lawyer Well-Being:** The workgroup noted above includes a well-being lens to ensure that mental health, work-life balance and overall well-being are also prioritized across the profession, reflecting the essential connection between wellness, inclusivity and professional excellence.

The 2024 Quality of Life Summit in November advanced the work further and will inform our continued focus on well-being in the profession throughout the coming year.

A key focus for our current strategic planning is to bring these efforts into one plan, rather than having stand-alone plans for DEI and LWB. Bringing these initiatives together reaffirms the mission, functions and goals of the bar, recognizing the interconnectedness of all three. This work is beginning in earnest now with a new strategic plan anticipated in the summer of 2025.

Personal Highlights

As I reflect on this year, I feel a deep sense of fulfillment not only from what we achieved together as a bar but also from the personal connections and insights gained.

1. Mindfulness, Professionalism and Showing up:

Through targeted talks, presentations and CLEs for attorneys, judges and law students, we explored situational mindfulness, the connection to professionalism and using mindfulness to recognize the biases, narratives and patterns that often influence our decisions and interactions. This work is a step forward in creating a legal culture rooted in authenticity, balance, grace and respect for the communities we serve. This year has also given me an opportunity to learn from my own practice, which has been such a gift.

2. Destigmatizing Alcoholism:

I've shared openly about my own relationship with alcohol, because I believe we still have work to do in destigmatizing mental health and substance use within our profession. It's essential that we normalize these conversations, creating an environment where every lawyer feels supported in seeking help without fear of judgment.

3. Rural Legal Needs:

This year, under the leadership of the Oregon New Lawyers Division, we also took a closer look at the lawyer shortage in rural areas. The reality is that the demand for legal services vastly outweighs the supply of lawyers, especially in underserved and rural communities. The OSB is actively exploring partnerships, loan repayment programs and remote service



**YOUR FAMILY'S
LAW FIRM.**

GUIDING FAMILIES THROUGH
ADOPTIONS & FAMILY PLANNING

Gevurtz Menashe
SINCE 1982

Rob Shlachter
Mediator & Arbitrator

Seasoned ▼ Creative ▼ Tireless



Stoll Berne
209 SW Oak St Ste 500
Portland OR 97204
503.227.1600
stollberne.com
rshlachter@stollberne.com

Over 20 years of Representing Individuals through Civil and Criminal Investigations, in Trials, and on Appeal



Thompson Law

Defense | Strategy | Re-Defined

www.thompsonlawllc.com

models to address this crisis. The weight of addressing the ATJ gap is lighter when shared, and I am grateful to be part of a bar that embraces this responsibility.

4. **Engaging with Law Schools:** Our law students represent the future of the legal profession. This year I've had the privilege of working closely with all three of Oregon's law schools and I am grateful for that. I firmly believe that we have an obligation as lawyers and a legal community to create better paths for those who come after us, creating more fertile ground than we had, to empower individuals to show up fully as who they are and enter the field with a strong foundation in professionalism, inclusivity and well-being. Thank you to all who serve as mentors and models to new and aspiring lawyers across the state.

Taking Shelter in Gratitude

As we move into a new year, I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the journey we've shared. I am deeply grateful to all OSB members for your commitment to advancing justice, equity and wellness in our profession. We have made incredible strides together, and each of you has played a role in this collective success. We are a diverse community with a common purpose, and it is your dedication that inspires me to believe in an ever-brighter future for Oregon's legal profession.

If you'll allow me, I'd like to close with the Buddhist concept of metta — offering a simple wish for you in the coming year:

- May you be safe,
- May you be healthy,
- May you be happy,
- May you find your freedom,
- May you know peace,
- May you move through the world with ease.

Thank you for the trust you've placed in me and for the opportunity to serve. I look forward to seeing where we go from here — one day at a time. ■

David Rosen is the 2024 president of the Oregon State Bar. He is the founder of High Desert Law in Bend. Reach him at drosen@osbar.org.

OSB Professional Liability Fund

PAY DAY | Deposit 10k for start-up fees | Hire 10 new employees | Spin Again

PAY DAY | Call PMA about retiring | **RETIRE**

What's your next move?

Call the Practice Management Attorneys Team for guidance.

503.639.6911 | osbplf.org