



David O'Keefe



Letter from the President

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Allow me to reminisce about 45 years' experience in the practice of law. It was 1965, after graduation from UCLA Law School, when I joined what was then known as Bonne & Jones, soon thereafter to become Bonne, Jones & Bridges. The firm was one of only a handful of boutique firms in the Los Angeles area that specialized in professional liability litigation with particular emphasis on medical malpractice defense.

It was the collegiality of the firm, the reputation of its senior members, and the opportunity for early trial experience that convinced me to join the firm. I was provided an exceptional opportunity to learn the art of trial advocacy from some of the best trial lawyers in the community. In those early years of my career, the stakes involved in most malpractice cases were modest in comparison to today's standards and trial opportunities for young lawyers were easy to come by. In 1965, I do not believe there had as yet been anything approaching a \$1 million personal injury verdict in all of Los Angeles County. Thus, young lawyers were provided multiple opportunities to hone their skills on lesser damage cases. I recall that my first case involved a woman who alleged that the doctor had fractured a hypodermic needle while administering an injection into her right hip. Fortunately, we were able to prove that the needle remnant which was still in her hip, was actually part of a sewing needle that the patient must have sat on, but somehow had been unaware of during her brief career as a seamstress. We won.

As important as the lessons learned from observing my senior partners try cases, were the lessons learned from constant interaction with a series of very experienced trial opponents.

Several of these prominent personal injury attorneys of the time such as Jerome Pollack, David Harney, Irving Green, Edgar Simon, and others, had a dramatic impact upon my education. Each of these gentlemen, now long gone from the practice of law, were effective and ingenious trial advocates. I will not forget Jerome Pollack attempting to call my defense experts to the witness stand for cross-examination during his case in chief and prior to presenting his own experts for their direct examination. The obvious intent being to present all of the unfavorable evidence early in the case and reserve his expert testimony until the very end of the case when it would be fresh in the minds of the jury, just prior to final argument.

Nor will I forget when David Harney, during an opening statement, presented a series of cartoon drawings prepared by his illustrator as a pictorial representation of how his client jumped from the third story window of a psychiatric hospital with nursing personnel gleefully looking out the window and waving the decedent goodbye.

Nor do I wish to overlook Irving Green, whom I saw spring up from counsel table just as a defendant was about to correct an obvious mistake in his testimony and Irving shouted to the court that other defendants seated in the back of the courtroom were attempting to signal a new answer to the testifying witness, thereby making it embarrassing and virtually impossible for the testifying doctor to thereafter correct his erroneous answer.

And, lastly, I recall observing Edgar Simon once during an opening final argument touch only briefly upon the essential elements of his case and thereafter advise the jury that he had completed his opening argument and now it was the defense's opportunity to present their closing argument, but that upon conclusion of the defense argument, the jury would hear from him again in much greater detail concerning his evaluation of the evidence. A clever plan designed to take away from the defense any opportunity to comment upon the significant details he intended to raise about the case during his rebuttal presentation.

It is unfortunate that many of these flamboyant trial personalities are no longer available to observe or to learn from. We may not always have agreed with their strategies, but most certainly they taught the less experienced trial lawyer to always anticipate the unexpected.

The lack of small exposure cases today prevents young lawyers from obtaining the needed trial experience necessary to advance their careers. The costs associated with litigation simply make trial of lesser damage cases unfeasible.

Nonetheless, it is incumbent upon firms such as ours to do everything possible to ensure that talented, young lawyers interested in a trial practice receive not only the training necessary to conduct meaningful discovery and to resolve cases through dispositive motions and mediation, but also to receive the training necessary to develop the skills and confidence to try those cases that are not amenable to other forms of resolution. A certain percentage of cases should be put to the test of a jury verdict. The collective wisdom of 12 unbiased jurors, more often than not, will result in a just and appropriate resolution of most cases. Our firm should and does remain committed to the preservation of the jury system and to training our young associates in the art of effective trial advocacy. It defined our firm in 1965 and as we look toward our next fifty years, this commitment to our profession and clients endures.

David J. O'Keefe, President

Bonne Bridges...a closer look

Q & A

During the course of a case, clients become well acquainted with Bonne Bridges senior associates and partners. Our associates are also indispensable members of our litigation team. They embody the vitality of our counsel to clients and form the future of our firm. And we think they are great and interesting people in their own rights.

We asked a handful of top associates to answer a few questions so you can get to know them better too.



Leah Mason

What attracted you to litigation? Medical malpractice?

In law school, the fast pace of litigation seemed very exciting. With medical malpractice, I enjoy that each case is so different. Every day I go to work I'm faced with a new challenge and exposed to new experiences.

Most memorable client request?

I was once asked to ship a human brain across state lines. I was happy to find out that they have special transportation services for that sort of thing.

Best advice ever received?

As Monty Python advised, always look on the bright side of life!
No matter what happens, I try to stay positive.

Advice to law students today?

When you start your job search, think back to the original reason you applied to law school to guide your career choice. And, study!



Linda Rurangirwa

What attracted you to litigation? Medical malpractice?

When visiting lawyers spoke before our law school classes, the litigators seemed to have the most fun. I wanted to practice with a firm that put you in the trenches and let you participate in all aspects of discovery, and sit in on trial, instead of chaining you to a desk doing legal research. Medical malpractice litigation has more than lived up to my expectations. I could not imagine practicing in any other area of law.

Most memorable interaction with a client?

Preparing a client's emotionally fragile wife for deposition with a particularly aggressive and confrontational plaintiff's counsel. She had no idea about the deposition process. During several grueling deposition preparation sessions, she often cried and I despaired, but at deposition she was absolutely phenomenal. I was very proud of her.

Best advice ever received?

This too shall pass.

What are you most looking forward to in your practice in 2011?

Trying a case.

Advice to law students today?

Learning the law and how to think like a lawyer is not just about learning to be a lawyer; it changes the way you look at everything and will be an invaluable part of the rest of your life.

h o n o r i n g

All of the hard work and dedication from the employees at Bonne Bridges is very much appreciated. A special "Thank you" goes to the following outstanding employees celebrating anniversaries:

45 years

David O'Keefe President, LA

30 years

Geraldine Bannister Secretary, LA

Elizabeth Alcaraz Secretary, LA

25 years

Patricia Tyler Secretary, LA

Renato Garcia Central Services, LA

20 years

Brian Hoffman Shareholder, LA

Gregory Werre Shareholder, LA

Mary Test Associate, LA

Cyndy Haworth Office Manager, LA

10 years

Francine Correa Accounting, LA

5 years

Steven Lawrence Central Services, LA

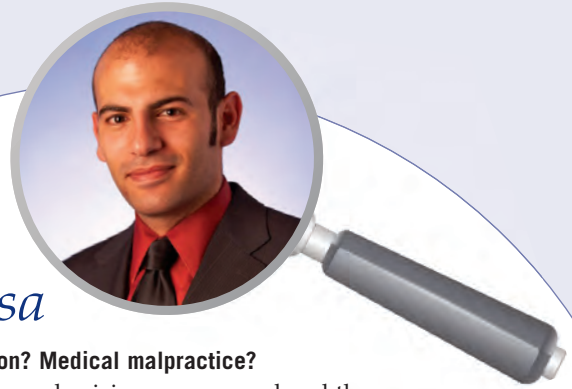
Sophaline Chhoeng Receptionist, OC

g i v i n g
b a c k

At Bonne Bridges, we recognize that our obligations extend not only to our clients but to our communities as well. The firm and its lawyers and staff give generously of their time, financial support, expertise and leadership skills in order to give back to the communities in which we live and work. Areas of Bonne Bridges' commitment to the community include, but are not limited to:

CHOC

- Cradle Los Angeles Foundation**
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation**
- Junior League of Pasadena**
- Knights of Columbus**
- LA County Bar Foundation**
- LA Food Bank**
- LA Gay & Lesbian Center**
- Marymount High School**
- National Asian Pacific Bar Association**
- UCLA School of Law**
- Venice Family Clinic**
- Verbum Dei High School**
- Women's Lawyer Association of Los Angeles**
- Youth Emergency Services & Shelter (YESS)**



Mark Koussa

What attracted you to litigation? Medical malpractice?

Eight of my family members are physicians or pre-med and the original plan was for me to follow in my father and grandfather's footsteps. But I wanted a different but mentally challenging and competitive career. I went in to law and decided to dedicate myself to helping defend doctors.

Most memorable interaction with a client?

Dealing with difficult subject matters, occasionally there are photos I still cannot stomach. One client insisted that we go through the photos in excruciating detail. I tried to veer into other topics, but she kept returning to the pictures. The meeting lasted over an hour.

Best advice ever received?

Know when to shut up. When I first started, Bonne Bridges partner Tom O'Neil told me the art of knowing when to speak, and when to be quiet, no matter how much you want to hear your own voice. I have seen people talk themselves into corners unnecessarily, and even talk themselves out of winning motions.

Advice to law students today?

Never forget your common sense. There are plenty of times when taking a step back, and just using your ability to reason, rather than relying on research and other people's approaches, can guide you through the most complicated and novel topics.



Alexis Amber

What attracted you to litigation? Medical malpractice?

Ever since grade school, I loved legal/mystery novels and television programs. It seemed that everyone I knew when I was growing up was involved with lawyers. I thought I would be able to help people if I became a lawyer. In high school, I developed an interest in medicine. In law school, I realized I could practice law and remain connected to the field of medicine.

What are you most looking forward to in your practice in 2011?

Developing client relationships, learning more about their business and achieving successful outcomes for my clients.

Best advice ever received?

Follow my passions and to be myself.

Advice to law students today?

To be a great lawyer let your own personality and self-confidence come through in each case.



Lisa Panique

What attracted you to litigation? Medical malpractice?

Participating in my law school's moot court trial team was amazing and I really enjoyed my studies at the DePaul University Health Law Program.

Best advice ever received?

Growing up, my brothers and I played competitive sports, and my dad, who is an accomplished athlete, told us different "mantras" before an important game. The mantra that still rings true is "Practice the way you play." My father stressed the importance of putting in your best effort during practice so that come game time you are ready. This mantra still applies to my approach to litigation.

What are you most looking forward to in your practice in 2011?

Hoping for my first opportunity to sit first chair in a jury trial. If not, I am hopeful to have another second-chair trial opportunity.

Advice to law students today?

Take advantage of practical skills classes. Advanced Trial Skills and/or Legal Writing courses will develop important skills for your legal practice.



Ryan Ortuno

What attracted you to litigation? Medical malpractice?

I relish helping healthcare professionals involved in lawsuits remain focused on their patients while we focus on resolving the lawsuits. Creating legal strategy, zealously advocating for clients, and building ongoing client relationships all attracted me to litigation. Medical malpractice affords me the opportunity to work with brilliant people who are committed to improving the lives of others.

Most memorable interaction with a client?

We once represented a doctor who was being sued for the first time. She was brilliant, driven, compassionate and utterly shaken by the fact that she could be sued for making a life or death decision she was trained to make. I still recall how deeply this lawsuit struck her, but at the same time, the compassion she still felt for the patient. Remembering that lawsuits consume the lives, thoughts and hopes of real people inspires me to work hard to try to relieve their worry.

Best advice ever received?

My parents are two of the hardest working people I know. I don't recall them ever taking a vacation of more than a day or two. Also, my dad and I share a love of sports, including boxing, and he demonstrated that no matter what happens in life, you have to keep punching and never let anyone outwork you. This has been the most consistent theme throughout my life.

Advice to law students today?

Enjoy every minute. You never know when you are going to need to use the knowledge and skills you gain. Do not for a second take law school for granted. Becoming a lawyer is a tremendous accomplishment, and it is a privilege to be a member of the California state bar.