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## Message From the Chair

By Ramit Mizrahi

I spent a month reflecting on this column, my final message as Section Chair. I wanted it to be meaningful—not just the usual thank yous and goodbyes (although those can be found below).

As I write this column, I am 35,000 feet up in the air, returning from a glorious visit to Glacier National Park and to see family. In the five days that we were at the Park, we hiked 40 miles (with my six-year-old leading the way much of the time) and immersed ourselves in nature. Glacier National Park is spectacular, with glaciers, waterfalls, lakes, rivers, forests, and majestic wildlife all around. (Sadly, with climate change, many of the glaciers will be gone in the next 10 to 20 years.)

I've always found that when hiking, I have a chance to get lost in my thoughts and to contemplate life. I take a step back from the day-to-day and start to think about the big picture. Indeed, some of my biggest life decisions were made on a trail at one of our national parks. Inevitably, I reflect on how life can be so beautiful, yet also so fleeting, so arbitrary, and sometimes so cruel. We must work to build a future (for ourselves, and for the next generations), and yet we never know whether/when our good fortunes will run out and this very day will be our last (or our last in good health or with our loved ones).

How we spend our time and money often requires a tradeoff between present and future. Each of us will have our own Goldilocks spot. The only way to strike the

right balance is by being conscious of our own choices. Consider going to whatever special place lets you reflect, and ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you happy in your job? Is your career fulfilling/rewarding? Are there changes you would like to make or somewhere else you'd rather be? If so, what's holding you back? What sacrifices would a change require and are you prepared to make them?
- Are you working too much? Not enough? Why? Can you change that? How?
- Are you surrounding yourself with the right people? Are you spending enough time with those near and dear to you? Will you regret time you missed?
- Are you spending time on activities that bring you happiness? What are the non-work activities that make you lose track of time?
- Are you being a "good squirrel" and saving enough for retirement? Will you one day be able to reach a point of financial independence where you have greater control over how you spend your time?
- Are you spending money wisely? Have you found yourself keeping up with the Joneses? Why?
- Are you taking care of your body (you only have one!)? Exercising? Eating healthy foods? Making sure your workspace is ergonomic?
- Do you feel that you will be leaving this world a better place than you found it? Are you supporting the causes that are near and dear to your heart? Giving your time? Money?
- If you had more time, how would you spend it? Are there any current demands on your time that you can ditch?
- Do you regret any choices that you have made? Are you repeating your mistakes or have you learned from them?
- Are you living life in a manner consistent with your goals?
- How do you want to be remembered?

When reflecting on these questions, you may realize that you are unhappy with some of your answers. Some may have easy fixes. Others may require greater life changes, but ones that you are ready to make. Yet others may require long-term planning and unwavering dedication.

My reflections at Glacier National Park filled me with tremendous gratitude. I love my family and friends, my work, my clients, my team. And while I could stand to exercise more and spend less time in front of screens, I can't think of any major life changes I'd want to make that I haven't already. My mind is

stimulated, my heart is full. I've even found the time for hobbies, including taking up painting again and making good use of my Magic Castle membership.

I am also grateful for the year that I have been able to serve as Chair of this Section. The Section had its best year yet, including putting on our most well-attended Wage and Hour Conference and Annual Meeting to date. The time flew by!

So now, before the great big hook pulls me off the stage, it is my time to say goodbye as Chair, and to thank all of the people who have supported me in the role and helped make this year a success:

- We couldn't have done it without the hard work of the Section's Executive Committee Members and Advisors. Our Executive Committee is made up of people who, in addition to being at the top of their field, are good human beings who give generously of their time and energy. It has been a privilege working with them.
- Section Coordinator Nicole Downing and Administrative Assistant Tiffany Creswell are exceptional at their jobs. They are always responsive, work at lightning speed, anticipate the Section's needs and get things done, and are a joy to be around. Our Section is so fortunate to have them!
- I am grateful to Tom Lenz, Immediate Past Chair, with whom I have had the opportunity to work closely during my three years as an officer, and who is now a dear friend.
- Thank you also to the other prior Chairs during my time on the committee: Bryan Schwartz, Amy

Oppenheimer, Hon. Michael Whittaker, Carol Koenig, and Suzanne Ambrose.

- Incoming Chair Erich Shiner has for years worked indefatigably on behalf of the Section (including on this Law Review and, with Arthur Krantz, spearheaded efforts to update the California Public Sector Labor Relations and California Public Sector Employment Law books). I know the Section will benefit tremendously from his leadership.
- Incoming Vice Chair Deborah Maddux helped make our webinars and online CLE a fantastic resource for our members, and Scott Stillman took over the role with great success.
- Treasurer Anne Giese (a role I hope she'll hold for life!) has helped protect our Section's finances and enabled us to fund the activities that our members value.
- Incoming Secretary Adam Fiss has supported so many aspects of our Section for years and will make an excellent officer.
- Phil Horowitz, former Section Chair and current Representative to the CLA Board of Representatives, has done much of the Section's heavy lifting at the organizational level and has played an oversized behind-the-scenes role in supporting the CLA through its transition.
- David Peyerwold, Managing Editor of this Law Review for the past decade, is the unsung hero of this publication and the glue that holds everything together! Thank you also to Law Review Executive Editor Laura Davis and Editors-in-Chief Rachel Bien, Kevin

Hosn, Hina Shah, and MiRi Song, as well as the rest of the Editorial Board.

- I am grateful to all of the Executive Committee members who have taken on leadership roles, including: Jinny Kim, who served as chair of the annual conference committee, oversaw the diversity scholarships program, and supported the Your Legal Rights radio show; Theodora Lee, who served as chair of both the wage and hour conference and the mediation conference committees; Katherine Thompson, who served as chair of the public sector conference committee; Maribel Hernandez, who served as chair of the new lawyers conference committee; Scott Stillman, who oversaw the education committee and served as annual meeting vice chair; Kevin Hosn, who served as public sector conference vice chair and marketing liaison; Ireneo Reus, who did a killer job as marketing liaison building this Section's Facebook presence; Glenn Danas, who served as wage and hour conference vice chair and marketing liaison; Laboni Hoq, who oversaw our grants program; Arlene Prater, who headed the sponsorships committee; Christy Kwon, who led the outreach committee; Joe Ortiz, who played significant roles in the outreach committee and the new lawyers conference; Arthur Krantz, for his role in editing and overseeing our Section's two books; Samson Elsbernd, who took the lead on the eNews; Latika Malkani, for representing

our Section on CLA's jury instructions committee; Amy Oppenheimer, who worked on collaborative law issues; Andrew Friedman, a long-time Law Review contributor, Year in Review presenter, and endless source of ideas; Michael Robbins, governmental affairs liaison; and CYLA Liaison Alexandra Stathopoulos, who introduced the Fresh Perspectives column. Thank you also to Carl Botterud, Aaron Cole, Monica Guizar, and Kristianne Seargeant for all of your contributions.

- I also want to thank my mentors over the years. Yale Law School Professor Vicki Schultz, my mentor and now friend, helped ignite my passion for employment law when I was a law student. My friends and former colleagues


at Allred, Maroko & Goldberg gave me a solid foundation as a young attorney. I am constantly inspired by Judge Richard A. Paez, for whom I had the pleasure of clerking and whose brilliance as a judge is matched only by his kindness as a human being.

- Although I was a sole practitioner for nearly five years, I was never alone. I am grateful for the friendship, guidance, and support of my close friends and fellow employment lawyers Sarah Schlehr, Craig Byrnes, Andrew Friedman, and Lauren Teukolsky. Thank you also to Jeffrey Rager, Norm and Beverly Pine, Kevin Chiang, and Barbara DuVan-Clarke.
- My associate John Schwab and paralegal Kathryn Crandall have made a qualitative difference in my

practice, as did my former paralegals Peyton Jones (now a law student) and Joseph Hernandez (now a deputy district attorney). I couldn't be happier to be able to work with them.

- Finally, I am lucky beyond words to have the love and support of my husband, son, and the rest of my family.

It is impossible to name all the people who have helped make this year special, and who helped me get here. I am sure that once I send this off to print, I will realize that I forgot to mention people who deserve thanks. My apologies in advance to those who feel left out; please know that I appreciate you nonetheless.

And with that, I hand things over to our incoming Section Chair Erich Shiners, Vice Chair Deborah Maddox, and Secretary Adam Fiss. The Section couldn't be in better hands with the three of them! 

## Visit the Section's Website

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<https://calawyers.org/labor-and-employment-law>

There, you'll find news of upcoming Section events and programs, information about the Section's publications, a link for subscribing to Case Law Alerts (delivered directly to your email inbox), a link to past broadcasts of "Your Legal Rights" on radio station KALW, and full-length articles and excerpts from past issues of the *Law Review*.

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