

May 29, 2017; Taking a break from Writing; Thanks for Reading!

This week's article marks the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of my Life, Love and the Law column. And, because I'll be taking a hiatus from writing for a while, it will be my last, at least for a few months. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for bearing with me and for reading my column. I can only hope that you have enjoyed reading the weekly articles as much as I've enjoyed researching and writing them. The experience of writing a weekly column has been very challenging, but also extremely rewarding. I learned a lot!

In my first article I wrote, "Like it or not, from our first breath to our last, laws constantly impact our lives, the lives of those we love and, sometimes, those we used to love. In between the extremes of birth and death, a variety of laws weave their influence through many aspects of our lives."

To be candid, when I wrote these words I didn't fully appreciate just how wide of a net laws cast over our lives. In my day-to-day routine as a family law attorney, I most frequently come in contact with laws that impact divorces, guardianships, adoptions, restraining orders, and wills. Writing this column has exposed me to laws that impact other aspects of our daily lives.

For example, in my 155 articles, I've covered such topics as legalized marijuana, same-sex marriage, gender equality, the death penalty, abortion, right-to-die laws, reproductive services, gun laws, sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, gambling, cyberbullying, and flag burning, among others. For many of these topics, I was learning about them for the first time right along with my readers.

From the beginning, my goals were to educate, inform, entertain, and challenge my readers. Many of the weekly topics were controversial and generated lively comments from opposing points of view. On several occasions over the last three years readers have come up to me and thanked me for writing my column, even though they did not always agree with my point of view. I really appreciated these comments.

Unfortunately, there is a growing trend for people to seek out only those points of view that correspond to their own personal positions on any given topic. This is a very dangerous trend that needs to be reversed. Our democracy depends upon open and frank conversations concerning important issues. We can only make informed decisions if we hear from, and consider, all sides of a controversy.

I am grateful to the *Pacific Daily News* for providing me with an opportunity to give back to a community that has been my home for over 40 years. It truly has been a privilege to serve the public through my column. Over the next few months, I'll give much thought into how I can make further contributions to spark public discourse and discussion on topics within and outside the legal arena. Although my

typing fingers may take a rest, they'll soon get restless for a new challenge. I can't wait to see where they lead me!

In closing, I extend my sincere thanks to my friend and editor, Roberta Abaday, for her invaluable help over the past three years!! Happy retirement!!