

# VALLEY LAWYER

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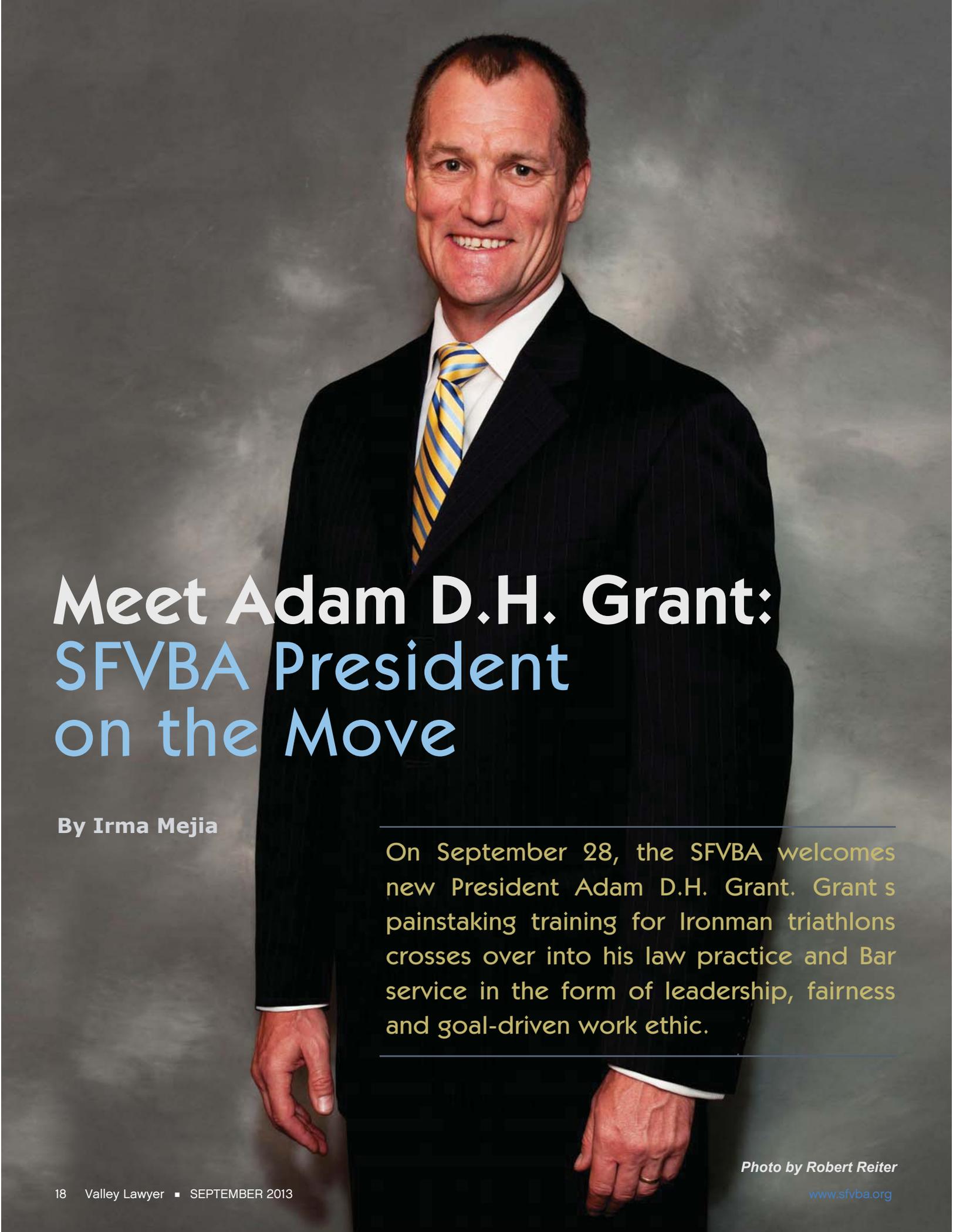
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Meet Adam D.H. Grant:  
SFVBA President  
on the Move

Understanding  
Conflicts of Interest  
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A professional portrait of Adam D.H. Grant, a man with short brown hair, smiling. He is wearing a dark pinstriped suit jacket, a white dress shirt, and a yellow and blue striped tie. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

# Meet Adam D.H. Grant: SFVBA President on the Move

By Irma Mejia

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On September 28, the SFVBA welcomes new President Adam D.H. Grant. Grant's painstaking training for Ironman triathlons crosses over into his law practice and Bar service in the form of leadership, fairness and goal-driven work ethic.

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**T**HE SFVBA WILL CELEBRATE THE INSTALLATION of its 87<sup>th</sup> President, Adam D.H. Grant, on September 28 at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills. As a past Trustee and past Chair of the Business Law Section, Grant brings to the post years of Bar leadership experience and an impressive record as a business litigator. Grant has practiced law for 22 years and is a partner at Alpert, Barr & Grant, LLP in Encino. His practice has focused on complex business litigation, construction law, real estate and general liability claims. He is also currently taking a lead in the emerging field of privacy and data security in mobile technologies.

Born in Phoenix, Arizona, Grant attended college at the University of California, San Diego where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. He attended Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles where he graduated with Moot Court honors. As a law student, he served as an extern for Bankruptcy Appellate Judge Barry Russell. Throughout the years, Grant has published several articles on mobile application privacy, litigation procedure and ethics and lectured nationally on mobile privacy and security.

In addition to his service to the SFVBA, Grant has volunteered for various legal aid and Jewish organizations, including the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. Grant is also a dedicated athlete and regularly competes in marathons and Ironman distance triathlons. As of the date of his installation, Grant will have completed nine Ironman triathlons. His daily athletic training crosses over into his law practice and volunteer service in the form of a high energy, goal-driven work ethic.

It is this vibrant dedication that makes outgoing President, David Gurnick confident in his successor's ability to lead the Bar. "Adam is a can-do, will-do, no-nonsense, strong leader," says Gurnick. "He is smart, insightful and organized. He will bring a style of strength, directness, efficiency and forward motion to our bar association."

SFVBA Executive Director Elizabeth Post also recognizes Grant's uncommon drive and talent. "I have worked with 20 Bar presidents, each with unique personalities and strengths. After working with Adam for the past six years as an officer and trustee, I know he will be one of the Bar's most driven and focused presidents."

SFVBA Director of Public Services, Rosie Soto Cohen, agrees. "Adam is always prepared. He makes sure to read all the necessary reports prior to a meeting and he doesn't like to waste time reviewing redundant information. Our Board will certainly be very efficient under his leadership."

Grant's refreshing leadership style, influenced by years of competitive sports training, has made an impression on many who have worked closely with him. "Adam has a keen sense of fair play. He is able to maneuver between warring parties and strive for that acceptable balance," says SFVBA Director of Education & Events Linda Temkin. "He has a great understanding of team play and what it takes to set reachable goals."

His competitive activities hasn't kept him from forming bonds with his colleagues at the Bar and helping when needed. "What strikes me most about him is his business-oriented management style. He inspired me to draft a workable business plan for the Attorney Referral Service, a project that has made a tremendous impact in the way the ARS is managed," explains Soto Cohen.

Grant shares his successes in the court and on the race course with those who mean the most to him: his wife and three daughters. With his family, busy law practice and rigorous training schedule, Grant has managed to find the work-life balance that often eludes many attorneys. Of his work-life balance, Post says, "I admire that Adam is clear about his priorities, with his family coming above all else." "He certainly models the right work-life balance," notes Temkin. "And possibly because he lives in a houseful of women, he is also a great listener and actively engages you in conversation. He truly appreciates and respects women."

"Hopefully, his dedication to fitness impacts us at the Bar—maybe we can get an office treadmill!" continues Temkin. His energy has already started to rub off on at least one staff member. "Adam has inspired me to train to run my first half marathon this fall," says Post.

Indeed, the entire SFVBA staff looks forward to collaborating with the incoming president on his biggest goal for the year: establishing an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Center in the Valley to fill the void left by the now defunct Superior Court ADR program. Grant is currently working closely with a talented team of SFVBA members to establish this greatly needed program. Grant further discusses this goal and other issues in a recent conversation with *Valley Lawyer*.

**Q:** What do you hope to accomplish as SFVBA President this year?

**A:** As President of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association, I hope to establish a Valley mediation center, a 501(c)(3) organization supported by our bar association. Ideally the center would bring together pro bono and low cost mediators to assist litigants in resolving family law, probate and lower value civil matters.

**Q:** Why do you believe a Bar-sponsored mediation program is so important?

**A:** I am passionate about the mediation program because it will provide all litigants, regardless of their financial abilities, access to the courts. A program sponsored by the San Fernando Valley Bar Association will uniquely position the Bar to provide a critical service to the community and demonstrate the high level of commitment by the Valley's lawyers.

**Q:** In addition to establishing a mediation program, what other ways can the Bar help to ease the impact of the ongoing cuts to court budgets?

**A:** The Bar can ease the impact of budget cuts by encouraging its attorneys to volunteer as a judge pro



tem or as an on call mediator in the probate or family law courts. They can also volunteer their services at the community legal clinics hosted by the ARS throughout the year.

**Q:** What do you think the Bar's role in the Valley should be?

**A:** I believe the Bar's role in the Valley should be to support the community's access to the courts and to provide opportunities for Valley lawyers to seek out and rely on each other for business and support.

**Q:** Why do you think it is important for attorneys to be involved in their local bar associations?

**A:** The local bar association is important to all attorneys. It provides new attorneys with a wealth of knowledge and experience, while providing seasoned attorneys with opportunities to connect with colleagues and rely on those colleagues to assist their clients' needs.

**Q:** What do you view as the biggest challenge facing our Bar?

**A:** Our biggest challenge is reminding our local attorneys of the value of membership. In our tech-heavy lives, we tend to overlook the importance of face-to-face connections. We must expand our membership by showing other Valley lawyers the Bar's relevance and importance.

**Q:** Is there a specific area of the Bar, or a particular program, you would like to see improved?

**A:** I would like to see our Attorney Referral Service expand its reach in the community. And, of course, I'd like to see the establishment of the Valley mediation center.

**Q:** There have been a lot of discussions over the shaky future of the legal profession. What do you view as the biggest challenge facing the profession?

**A:** Lawyers play an integral role in the community but the challenge is for attorneys to demonstrate to the community that their work provides value and is reasonable. A significant challenge for attorneys is to keep the way they practice in sync with the ever changing technology to better assist their clients in the manner and mode they are most comfortable.

**Q:** What made you want to become a lawyer?

**A:** I learned very early that I had an aptitude for being able to quickly analyze complex matters and explain it in a concise, yet simple manner. I embraced reading, writing and the art of oral argument as early as elementary school. I also remember telling my fourth grade teacher who gave me a "needs improvement" grade for handwriting that when I became an adult, I would only need to sign my name, so it was ok that my handwriting grade was not in line with the other "A's" I received.

**Q:** How did you end up in your particular area of practice?

**A:** When I started to practice in 1991, I cut my teeth at an insurance defense firm at which I became a non-equity partner in three years because of the workload I took on. Of the numerous matters I handled, I gravitated toward construction issues and real estate disputes. These matters included more complex and unique issues in a litigation context. More recently, I expanded my practice to include mobile applications and online privacy law, which I recognize as an emerging field of law with the skyrocketing number of mobile phone sales and app downloads. I find this area's nuances extremely exciting.

**Q:** What advice would you give to a law student or new attorney?

**A:** Develop a book of business as soon as possible and understand the importance of integrity.

**Q:** You graduated from law school with moot court honors. Other legal professionals who have been featured in *Valley Lawyer* (most notably Judge Jerold Cohn) have had memorable experiences with moot court. How important do you think that experience is for a law student? What impact did it have in your career?

**A:** Moot court was an amazing experience for me in law school. I participated in moot court during my first year at Southwestern. As a law student, it is likely the first true piece of legal advocacy you engage in at the start of your career. I remember the first round of moot court I participated in during law school. I was paired up against the editor for the law review. At first I was intimidated, but I put those feelings aside and focused on my argument and how I was going to present my views. After the presentation, I felt that I actually had a real chance to win. After some nervous moments, the judges scored both of us and I won. I continued on to the quarter finals. From that experience, I learned that if I relied on my ability to focus when faced with challenges, I can and will accomplish my goals.

**Q:** When you're not in the office, what do you do for fun?

**A:** I have been married to an amazing wife, Joyce, for the past 24 years (actually 32 years of being together as a couple) and I spend endless hours with my three daughters, Jordan, Jenna and Julia. I also am passionate about participating in Ironman distance triathlons, which is the impetus for getting up at four in the morning and training two hours every day before work.

**Q:** How do you find balance between your work, family and recreational activities?

**A:** I calendar everything: litigation, workouts, family events and business development. Put it down on a calendar and make it happen.

**Q:** Do you have a favorite attorney?

**A:** Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a story that has lessons which ring true even today.

**Q:** What is your favorite book and why?

**A:** *Horton Hears a Who* by Dr. Seuss because it teaches the importance of tolerance, understanding and empathy.

**Q:** Who do you think is the best TV lawyer of all-time?

**A:** Hands down, Perry Mason! 🐶

**Irma Mejia** is Editor of *Valley Lawyer* and serves as Publications and Social Media Manager at the San Fernando Valley Bar Association. She also administers the Bar's Mandatory Fee Arbitration Program. She can be reached at [editor@sfvba.org](mailto:editor@sfvba.org).

