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TOP LAWYERS OF THE DECADE 2011-2020

Heather L. Rosing

The California Lawyers Association's inaugural leader

For Rosing, the decade ended on a positive note. She was recently elected CEO of Klinedinst PC with locations across California and in Seattle.

The appointment comes after an impressive 2010s where Rosing helped to guide the State Bar's historic split in 2018 and became the California Lawyers Association's first president.

The decision to split the bar had been discussed for decades, Rosing said. But it took until 2016 before discussions seriously emerged and bar staff started to seriously weigh the advantages of splitting the regulatory bar and the voluntary bar association.

Rosing said it had become clear to her and many others that the agency had become cumbersome. Rosing served on the Board of Trustees for four years.

"I knew that if we could separate the two parts, the new separate voluntary bar association could do so much more," Rosing said. "I knew that we could expand our advocacy, I knew that we could expand our work in the diversity arena, I knew that

we could do better membership campaigns, I knew that we could establish partnerships that weren't possible when we were part of the state bar. And I think I was right."

Rosing had a clear vision about her goals for the association once it became a separate entity. She wanted to build a robust and unparalleled association that had something to offer to every lawyer in California.

"There were some people in the section that didn't necessarily immediately embrace that vision," Rosing said. "But I would say that everybody, ultimately, saw the potential of the organization."

But building the association came with its challenges. Operating out of a "miserable space" at the bar, with a website that barely worked and no marketing strategies, meant that Rosing and her team had to overcome significant hurdles.

Thanks to a group of committed volunteers, the association managed to grow and is today based in Sacramento close to the legislature where CLA advocates for lawyers in California.

Rosing considers putting together the association's executive staff one of her greatest accomplishments.

"I knew I was only going to be president for about two years," Rosing said. "But how do you build your legacy? You get wonderful people who are committed to the vision to work for CLA."

Rosing's team managed to recruit several people who have held high positions in the legal



Thomas Kurtz / Special to the Daily Journal

community in California and a marketing director, which helped rebrand the association.

The former vice president and General Counsel at the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C., Ona Alston Dosunmu, joined as executive director and CEO.

With approximately 100,000 members, Rosing's work as president also consisted of establishing clear communication lines between the group's 16 sections that each have their own executive committees. It has 17 sections today.

"How do you make this all work? How do you get everybody on the same page? How do you have a shared vision?" Rosing said. "So it was a ton of communication. Certainly a lot of tough times, tears, headaches, that type

of thing. But I really feel like we've made incredible amounts of progress in those first two years and through today."

Rosing's presidency ended last year, but she remains heavily involved with the association's charitable arm and is the civility committee's new co-vice chair.

In the next decade, Rosing wants the association to continue to expand and attract younger lawyers to join.

"I want us to continue to be fluid and dynamic and expanding and not be stuck in the old ways," Rosing said. "But instead thinking of how we can strategically add new initiatives, add new sections, add new committees, add new topics to the organization for the benefit of all members."

— Henrik Nilsson