



# Meet the 2020 SFVBA Trustee Candidates

By Michael D. White

Next month, SFVBA members will have the opportunity to elect a new Board of Trustees from among a slate of 12 highly qualified and dedicated candidates. On the following pages, we profile each Trustee candidate and give SFVBA members the opportunity to gain some perspective into the candidates' individual goals and aspirations for the Bar over the coming year.



## ALEX J. HEMMELGARN



**LAW SCHOOL:** University of Illinois at Chicago Law School

**AREA(S) OF PRACTICE:** Tax, estate planning, probate, corporate law

**ADMITTED TO THE STATE BAR:** Illinois (2013), California (2015)

**WHAT DOES THE WORD 'SERVICE' MEAN TO YOU?** "Service means using, and encouraging and equipping others to use, personal expertise, time, and resources to improve the community."

**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE A LEGAL CAREER?**

"I was on the path towards a career in civil engineering when I found that, while I disliked the impersonal and seemingly tedious work of structural design, the work of attorneys at the company where I was interning seemed infinitely more interesting."

**WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?** "I read constantly and broadly, with a preference for political and military history and the novels of the Lost Generation expats. I enjoy listening to and playing music, especially blues and jazz. I am also currently trying to improve my French language proficiency from my current survival/travel level."

**DID YOU HAVE A CHILDHOOD HERO? WHO WAS IT? WHY?** "When I was in elementary school, I visited the Kennedy Space Center in Florida and purchased John Glenn's autobiography. His story, starting from small-town origins and utilizing education, hard work, and a sense of civic and public service to become an iconic American figure, had an instant and lasting impact."

**WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE CAREER MOMENT?** "My most memorable moment was on the day that the governor of Illinois signed a bill granting same-sex marriage there. My conversations with tearful and overjoyed clients will be a lasting memory and a reminder of human impact of political and legal issues."

**WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT THE VALLEY?** "I most appreciate the feeling of a separate close-knit community but with easy access of the amenities of greater Los Angeles."

Originally from a small town near Charleston, West Virginia, Alex Hemmelgarn attended Ohio State to study civil engineering. While working at an engineering consulting firm, he found that he enjoyed working with the firm's intellectual property attorneys far more than solving structural design problems.

Encouraged by a mentor to apply to law school, he received his JD from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and co-founded a small law firm focusing on estate planning and elder law for Chicago's LGBT community before earning an LLM in Tax.

After moving to Los Angeles, Hemmelgarn worked at Bet Tzedek Legal Services as the coordinating staff attorney of the Holocaust Survivor's Justice Network, where he assisted Holocaust survivors in applying for reparations to assist with estate planning and public benefits appeals.

For the last several years, he practiced tax, estate planning, probate, and corporate law in Encino, first with Goldfarb, Sturman & Averbach before joining Encino-based Lewitt Hackman in 2019.

## JESSICA W. ROSEN



**LAW SCHOOL:** Golden Gate University School of Law

**AREA(S) OF PRACTICE:** Franchise, distribution and business litigation

**ADMITTED TO THE STATE BAR:** 2013

**WHAT DOES THE WORD 'SERVICE' MEAN TO YOU?**  
"Helping others achieve individual and collective goals."

**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE A LEGAL CAREER?**  
"For as long as I can remember, I wanted to be a lawyer. The idea of being an advocate always inspired me."

**WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?** "It's hard to remember 'fun' in the age of COVID-19. Currently, there are puzzles, virtual hangouts, Zoom happy hours, and Starbucks runs."

**DID YOU HAVE A CHILDHOOD HERO? WHO WAS IT?**  
"My mom. I even dressed up as her for Halloween when I was six. I won most creative costume that year."

**WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE CAREER MOMENT?** "As an attorney for the appellant in the Ninth Circuit, my first reversal in a published opinion."

**WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT THE VALLEY?**  
"It's home."

Jessica Rosen grew up in the San Fernando Valley, in West Hills.

She received her undergraduate degree in History from University of California, San Diego and her a Master's degree in History from California State University, Northridge.

Rosen attended law school at Golden Gate University School of Law where she graduated top of her class and received numerous accolades. She also interned at both the United States Court of Appeal for the Ninth Circuit and the First District Court of Appeal.

After law school, Jessica volunteered at Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles as she waited for her bar results.

She began her professional career as an associate attorney at a Westside firm with a focus on appellate work in both federal and state appellate courts, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

She then transitioned into trial litigation before joining Lewitt Hackman. As an associate at Lewitt Hackman in the firm's Franchise & Distribution and Business Litigation Practice Groups, she has successfully advised clients and prosecuted and defended cases, receiving positive results for her clients.

When she is not working, she can be found baking pies, refurbishing mid-century furniture, and hanging out with her family, friends, and her pups.