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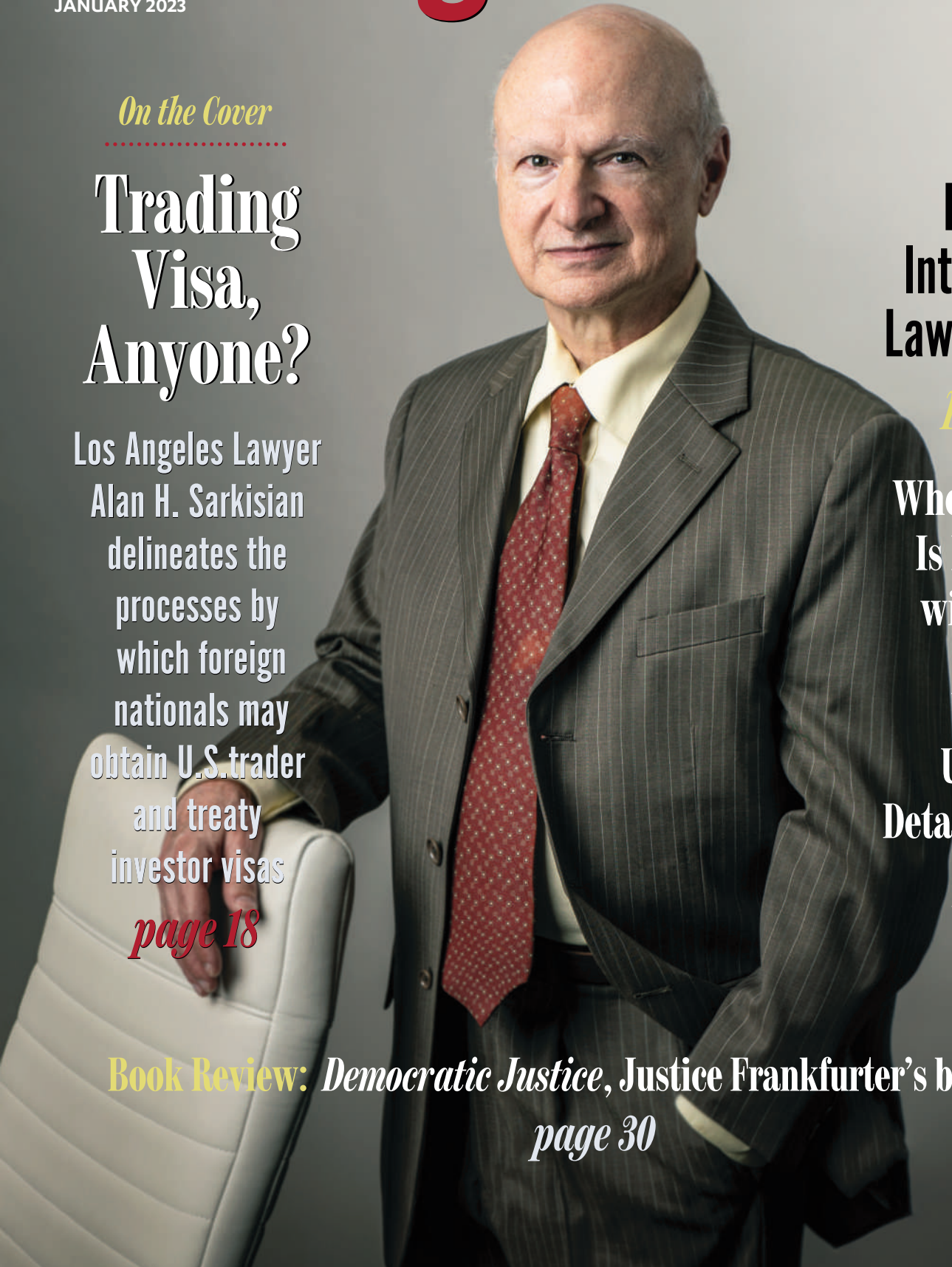
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by Adam B. Korn and Nicolas D. Franco

LACBA MATTERS

For the third year in a row, the Law Student Outreach Committee (LSOC), which is part of the Barristers/Young Attorneys Section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, has just kicked off its annual law student mentorship program. The program aims to support law students across Los Angeles, including students who are the first in their families to attend law school or who are otherwise of diverse backgrounds. The program is the flagship initiative for the LSOC co-chaired by authors Adam B. Korn and Nicolas D. Franco. In 2022, the program has grown to more than 150 participants.

The mentorship program pairs students from local law schools (e.g., Loyola Marymount University, Pepperdine University, Southwestern University, University of California, Los Angeles, University of California, Irvine, and University of Southern California) with volunteer mentors. The mentors include young attorneys of the Barristers/Young Attorneys section, seasoned practicing attorneys of LACBA, and even sitting judges. The program's goal is to pair participating students with attorneys who share their professional and personal interests. While mentors and mentees are encouraged to meet as often as they would like, mentors must commit to meeting with their mentees at least three times during the spring 2023 semester. In reflecting on the program, one of last year's mentors (Todd Berman) shared the following about his participation: "Mentoring in this program was rewarding, and I encourage others to participate. Some of my favorite conversations involved constructive feedback on my mentee's resume and cover letters."

As explained by Co-chair Korn the LSOC initially created the mentorship program in response to the pandemic and the cessation of in-person events. Because of these circumstances law students were no longer able to organically connect with lawyers at networking events. As a result, many law students were missing opportunities to receive guidance on such topics as on-campus interviews for law firm opportunities or the "write-on" competition for academic journals. From the very beginning, however, the program has been enthusiastically received and has significantly expanded. This is due to the work of the entire LSOC especially its student members.

While LACBA and the Barristers/Young Attorney Section have various committees or working groups, the LSOC is the only committee that invites current law students to join. At the beginning of each academic year, representatives from law schools in the area are chosen to sit on the LSOC. These law school representatives not only attend committee meetings but also are full-fledged members of the committee and work with the attorneys on the committee to plan programs and initiatives, including the mentorship program.

Co-chair Franco, who previously led the Bench Meets Bar Committee of the Barristers/Young Attorneys' Section, believes it is critical that the committee have local law students among its members. In addition to organizing LSOC events and programs, these student leaders steer the committee towards programming that is responsive to the needs and interests of law students. The success of our programs each year is due, in large part, to their hard work.

Also, beginning in spring 2022, the LSOC has added an in-person component to the mentorship program. This has been in response to a pronounced interest by both law students and attorneys to have in-person events as part of the program. The program's first in-person event took place in

May 2022 and brought together over 40 program participants for an evening of networking. We look forward to hosting two in-person events this spring to create more opportunities for the program's participants to network and connect.

Further, along with the mentorship program, the LSOC intends to launch a new program this year that will allow law students to attend a civil hearing in court and then, after the hearing, visit a judge's chambers to meet with the judge. Interning for a judge can help expose students to more in-court experiences. Thus, the aim of this program will be to help connect law students with judges informally to help clear some of the mystery of what it is like to actually appear in court and to encourage more students to consider interning and clerking for judges.

Anyone interested in learning more about the work of the LSOC or in getting involved in the mentorship program is encouraged to reach out to Adam and Nico at barristerslaw-studentliaison@gmail.com. ■

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