

# THE RECORDER

130TH YEAR NO. 206

www.callaw.com

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2006

ALM

## Bar Talk

PEOPLE AND PRACTICES

### *Aviation ace, grounded on Mexican roads, tries a Lincoln*

Terry O'Reilly has a need for speed. Or rather, a need to wrestle a vintage, 4,200-pound automobile with no power steering across thousands of miles of dusty Mexican highway.

Some speed would help, too, as the 61-year-old renowned plaintiff attorney will be making this drive as part of next month's legendary Carrera Panamericana race.

#### Sidebar

His San Mateo firm, O'Reilly & Danko, is probably best known for pursuing multimillion-dollar verdicts against the aviation industry. That work has kept O'Reilly plenty busy, but hasn't prevented him from indulging in his passion for vintage cars, which he's had since watching races as a tot in England.

"Trial lawyers only need two hours' sleep," he says.

Now O'Reilly and his friend, real estate investor Pat McDowell, have formed a team called "Two Boars Racing," poking fun at the fact that he



**RESURRECTED:** Plaintiff lawyer Terry O'Reilly is driving his 1949 Lincoln next month in the Carrera Panamericana, a weeklong Mexican road race where the same car competed 56 years ago.

and McDowell are "two old bores," O'Reilly says.

From Nov. 10-16, the two will take turns driving a maroon 1949 Lincoln Coupe across 2,200 miles of road, from Southern Mexico to a city near the Texas border. It's not a race for the faint of heart.

O'Reilly lists the challenges:

"No power steering, no power brakes, an engine pumping a huge amount of heat in your face, a big, steel body, riding on old steel springs; You're physically fighting with it."

The Lincoln was discovered a few years back sitting in a San Jose junkyard, painted pink, fuzzy dice hanging from its

mirror. But a discriminating parts hunter noticed it bore the traces — such as faded, circular, painted symbols — of a former race car. As it turns out, the car had run in the first Carrera Panamericana race in 1950, doing well until the fourth day of the race, when it failed to start. The parts hunter snapped up the Lincoln, and over time it was repainted, restored, and made its way into O'Reilly's collection.

The Carrera race was discontinued in 1955 but reborn as a vintage-car race in the 1980s.

Asked why they're racing this Lincoln in the Carrera Panamericana, O'Reilly wrote in an e-mail, "The real reason sounds bizarre unless you get used to plaintiff's trial lawyers. The real reason is that the romantic in me likes the idea of giving the old warrior the chance to finish the race she started 56 years ago. A junkyard, painted pink, is no place for a great racer."

— Jessie Seyfer