



NEWS RELEASE

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San Diego Superior Court Judge Leo Valentine Jr. Retires

Judge Leo Valentine Jr., a jurist described as a calm, commanding presence who treats all in his courtroom with dignity, is leaving the San Diego Superior Court, after serving on the bench since 1995. Judge Valentine first joined the Municipal Court after he was appointed by Governor Pete Wilson. In 1998, he was elevated to the Superior Court where he has spent a majority of his judicial career presiding over criminal cases.

Judge Valentine brought a notable pre-law and legal background to the court. He began his career in the transit industry and while in law school eventually becoming the director of operations of the Long Beach Public Transit Company. His work there was spotlighted when that company received the best-run transit division property award by the American Public Transit Association in 1989. After gaining his law degree and passing the Bar, he left the transit industry and joined the San Diego District Attorney's Office in 1990 where he eventually became the Assistant Chief of the office's Juvenile Division.

Attorneys have described Judge Valentine as a jurist who is fair and who steps in as a peacemaker, if needed when opposing attorneys clash.

Presiding Judge Peter C. Deddeh says, "Judge Leo Valentine was known for his excellent courtroom demeanor, always conducting himself in a dignified and respectful manner.

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We began working together in the District Attorney's Office, first as gang prosecutors, then as managers of the DA's Juvenile Division. Judge Valentine always cared deeply about helping disadvantaged youth, and supported programs that focused on rehabilitation. He brought that same caring spirit to his role as a judicial officer. Leo Valentine was much more than a judge, he was a role model for many and helped change many lives for the better during his long and distinguished judicial career. He will be missed."

Judge Valentine earned his law degree from Western State University, School of Law in Fullerton. He has participated in maintaining Superior Court operations by serving on numerous judicial committees including Juvenile and Family Services Committee as well as the Budget and Education Committees. He presided over one of the nation's first Homeless Courts and assisted other jurisdictions in implementing the program. Also, committed to the continuing education of California Judges, Judge Valentine served, on Curriculum Development Committees, Faculty Development Committees and as Faculty member of the Continuing Judicial Education and Research Division of the California Judicial Council.

Judge Valentine says, "It's been an honor to have served the community as a Judicial Officer. I am appreciative and grateful for the privileges and opportunities entrusted to me. It has been my tenet to show respect to every individual who came before the court. If I failed in this regard, I offer my sincere apology and ask for your forgiveness."

As for his retirement plans: Judge Valentine says he plans to enjoy family, friends and life.

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