



NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Post Office Box 120128 • San Diego, CA 92112-0128

Release: Immediately
Date: 8/20/09

Contact: Karen Dalton
Phone: (619) 450-5353

Superior Court Judge Michael B. Orfield Retires

San Diego Superior Court Judge Michael B. Orfield will retire on August 21, 2009 after 20 years on the bench. Appointed by then-Governor George Deukmejian, Judge Orfield, 60, began his judicial career as a Municipal Court Judge and was elevated to Superior Court following unification in 1998. Assigned to a Civil Independent Calendar in the North County Division since 2002, Judge Orfield has also served the court in numerous other assignments including Criminal Trial Setting; Felony Disposition; Civil Proceedings; Felony and Misdemeanor Arraignment and General Trial.

Judge Orfield has served on the Judicial Council of California, the Jury Instructions Task Force, the Civil Jury Instructions Advisory Committee, the Presiding Judges and Court Administrators Advisory Committee, and the Continuing Judicial Studies Education Committee. He has served as Chair of the Metropolitan Municipal Court Association, President of the San Diego County Judges Association, President of the Oliver Wendell Holmes (now Fiorenzo Lopardo) Inn of Court, and Presiding Judge of the San Diego Municipal Court. Judge Orfield currently teaches an advanced course entitled "Trying the Complicated Case: From Trial Setting to Verdict" as well as training courses on the use of the LexisNexis Criminal and Civil Jury Instructions computer programs.

(more)

Prior to joining the court, Judge Orfield worked in private practice with Wingert, Grebing, Anello & Brubaker, specializing in construction defect and personal injury litigation (1979-89). He also served as an Assistant District Attorney in San Diego County (1978-1979). Judge Orfield's judicial career follows that of his father, Judge Franklin Orfield, who served on the bench from 1969 until retirement in 1988.

Judge Orfield received his J.D. from California Western School of Law (1977). He received his B.A. in Biology from U.C.S.D. (1972) and attended Duke University (1973-1974) where he studied immunology.

Asked for some parting thoughts, Judge Orfield offered, "There are two quotes that I kept on my bench for 20 years: 'The first signs of judicial taxidermy are impatience with trivial matters' and 'Worse than judicial error is to mishandle impatiently the small affairs of momentarily helpless people.' These are lessons that I never forgot, even if I may have strayed from their warnings."

Presiding Judge Kenneth K. So says, "We will miss the invaluable contributions of Judge Michael Orfield. He has been instrumental in advancing the use of technology in our Court and is a wonderful teacher and colleague. He has been a terrific asset for the San Diego Superior Court.

"I am very fortunate to be 60 years old with 20 years on the bench, both in the same year. I have always thought about shifting gears after I retire, and to that end, I am moving into the world of mediation. If the next 20 years are as fulfilling as the last 20 have been, I will be truly blessed," says Judge Orfield.