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Volume 37, Number 3 | May 2024

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CONTRA COSTA LAWYER

Volume 37, Number 3 – May 2024

The official publication of the Contra Costa County Bar Association



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On the Cover: Thanks to the CCCBA Editorial Board and the Contra Costa County Historical Society, this issue includes the first attempt to compile a complete list of all of the judges of the Contra Costa County Superior Court. See page 23 for the list. The numbers on the cover correlate the the order each judge served the court. If you can help update or correct this list please contact Carole Lucido, Communications Director at clucido@cccba.org. Thank you.

JAMS WELCOMES . . .



Hon. Jeffrey S. Brand (Ret.)

Judge Brand has decades of legal experience, including as an Alameda County Superior Court judge, civil litigation practitioner and Dean of the University of San Francisco Law School. In addition to presiding over and litigating a wide range of complex disputes, Judge Brand has provided ADR trainings internationally. At JAMS, he will handle matters involving **business/commercial, construction defect, employment, personal injury, international, professional liability, real property** and **education** matters. Scan the QR code or visit jamsadr.com/brand to learn more.



Hon. Jill Fannin (Ret.)

Judge Fannin returns to JAMS after 20+ years on the Contra Costa Superior Court, where she served a term as presiding judge. She spent seven years in the Civil Settlement Department handling cases ranging from thousands of dollars to complex, multi-million-dollar disputes. Her current ADR practice will focus on **business/commercial, construction/construction defect, employment, family law, insurance, personal injury/torts, professional liability** and **real estate** matters. Scan the QR code or visit jamsadr.com/fannin to learn more.

INSIDE



To the Court, we say, “Thank You!”

The judges of Contra Costa Superior Court regularly sit en banc to welcome new judges to the bench. This photo is from Judge Gina Dashman’s induction October of 2023.

Since the year 1850, Contra Costa has had over 130 judges. Over these many years, these judges had different titles and differing types of courts over which they presided. These courts were known as District Courts, County Courts, Court of Sessions, Justices’ Courts, Recorder’s Court, Mayors Court, Judges of the Plains, Municipal Courts and, finally, in 1998, with the unification of all these courts, the Superior Court of Contra Costa County. Yet, regardless of the type of court, the role and responsibilities of the judges remained the same. Judges were and continue to be obliged to be impartial and unbiased in decision making – not an easy task in some situations.

As the Contra Costa County Bar Association marks its 90th Anniversary, we have this opportunity to acknowledge, celebrate and highlight the critical and, at times, deeply underappreciated role of the judges in the justice system. Oftentimes, judges are unrecognized for the pivotal role they play

in our system of justice. Without them, however, justice could not be achieved. We here at CCCBA are very honored and proud of the relationship we have built with the Contra Costa Superior Court bench. We appreciate the opportunity to hold Bench/Bar meetings, host judges as special guest speakers at many of our programs and provide opportunities for the bench and the legal community to gather, socialize, and break bread together. These experiences provide a foundation on which both the judges and the attorneys can strive to ensure justice and fair resolution for the parties involved in legal proceedings.

When it comes to acknowledging your impact and imprint in our community, “Thank You” just doesn’t seem to cut it. For, even though we often say “thank you, your honor” after you rule against us, it is safe to say we do not always mean it when we say it! Outside of the courtroom, beyond the ruling, however, we do mean it. This edition of Contra Costa Lawyer is

dedicated to the judges, past and present, that have served the Contra Costa Community.

The thanks above would also not be possible without captured totality, history, impact and stories of the court that inform this edition of the magazine. And that would not be possible without the assistance, support and incredible guidance of the Contra Costa County Historical Society. We are grateful for their careful capture and curation of our local judicial history.



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Contra Costa County's **Five Courthouses** and the History Behind their **Namesake Judges**

by Ray Robinson, Guest Editor

Contra Costa County is home to five courthouses which are named after five judges who served on the court. Two of the five judges were elevated to the First District Court of Appeal. In this article we recount the history of each courthouse and their namesake judges.



WAKEFIELD TAYLOR COURTHOUSE

725 Court Street, Martinez

The Wakefield Taylor Courthouse in Martinez is the main courthouse for Contra Costa County and was named for the former Superior Court Judge and Court of Appeal Justice:



JUSTICE WAKEFIELD TAYLOR

Justice Taylor was born in Ukiah, California and served as an officer in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He graduated from U.C. Berkeley in 1934 and received his law degree at Boalt Hall in 1937.

Justice Taylor started his legal career in Contra Costa County and was in a partnership with former Congressman John F. Baldwin. He was a Deputy District Attorney in the county and, after World War II, he served as its Chief Deputy. Members of that office were allowed to engage in their own private practice. As part of that private practice he served as the City Attorney in Antioch. He was also President of the Contra Costa County Bar Association.

In 1951, Governor Earl Warren appointed Justice Taylor to the newly created Department 5 of the Contra Costa County Superior Court, where he sat until appointed to the First Appellate District Court in 1963, where he later served as Presiding Justice. Justice Taylor was a founding member and first Chairman of Center for Judicial Education & Reform (CJER), served as Senior Presiding Justice in the First District and sat, on various occasions, as Pro Tem Justice of the Supreme Court of California. In discussing Justice Taylor with many lawyers, not one single negative word was spoken and many stated they "could not say enough kind words." Typical comments about the Justice include he was "an excellent judge, bright, superior judicial temperament, a great gentleman judge, a grand person as well as great jurist." "Wake" Taylor would never embarrass an attorney or a litigant by comments in open court. His method would be a quiet comment at a break, such as "come on, counsel, we can't allow this sort of thing." If a young attorney was making a mistake, the justice would call a recess and then in a nice manner suggest a different approach.

Justice Taylor retired in 1982 . He died in 2005 at the age of 93.¹

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Courthouses and Namesake Judges

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ARNASON JUSTICE CENTER

1000 Center Drive, Pittsburg

The Arnason Justice Center in Pittsburg was completed in 2010. There are seven courtrooms and the cases heard include family law, small claims, unlawful detainees, criminal and traffic proceedings and some domestic violence matters. It serves the communities of Antioch, Bay Point, Bethel Island, Brentwood, Byron, Discovery Bay, Knightsen, Oakley and Pittsburg.

JUDGE RICHARD E. ARNASON



Judge Arnason was born in farming country in Hensel, North Dakota. He graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1943 and U.C. Berkeley School of Law (known then as Boalt Hall) in 1946. His interest in the law was gener-

ated by an uncle in the profession, who later became a Supreme Court justice and dean of the law school at the University of Illinois. After a medical discharge from the military, Judge Arnason worked in the shipyards while studying law.

After graduation from law school and a brief experience in practice in Oakland, Judge Arnason came to Contra

Costa County in 1949, where he became associated with, and then a partner in, the firm of Hamm, Arnason, Waldie and Rockwell.

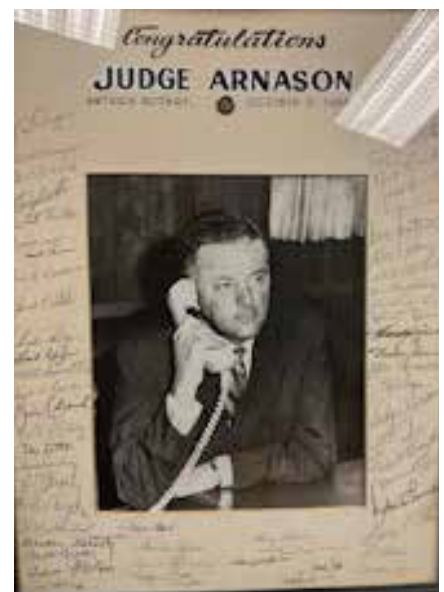
In 1963, Judge Arnason received the call from Governor Edmund G. Brown (as pictured above) appointing him to the Contra Costa Court. After his appointment, no other

Contra Costa judge has achieved the level of name recognition outside of the local legal community than Judge Arnason. He was known throughout the state because of his appointment to high profile, out-of-county criminal trials, and his handling of local cases of a similar nature. His most publicized case was tried on a special assignment to the Marin County Superior Court in 1971, when Angela Davis was charged with conspiracy and murder involving an attempted courthouse escape. This activity had caused the death of four people, including a Superior Court judge. Locally, he tried a number of death penalty and countless high-profile cases. During his tenure, he handled every type of assignment from Family Law through the Master Calendar, but his real passion was criminal justice. He served for ten years on the criminal pre-trial calendar and when he was moved from this activity to general trials, it brought unusual adverse comments from members of the criminal bar.

Known as the Dean of the Contra Costa Bench, he extended his tenure by remaining on the local court by assignment of the Judicial Council. Over the years, Judge Arnason gained a reputation as one of California's leading experts on criminal law and procedure. He read every published criminal case that was decided by the California Court of Appeals and California Supreme Court. With his expertise, he was in constant demand for teaching assignments throughout the state, including lectures at Hastings College of Law, California Judicial College, ATLA, CEB and CJER. He was selected as the trial judge of the year in Contra Costa County, and then for the State of California.

Judge Arnason retired (more than once) but returned to the bench until his keys to the courthouse were taken away from him in 2012 and he was escorted away in a huge parade-like procession consisting of 200 members of court personnel, lawyers, and judges.

In 2015, after 50 years as a Contra Costa Superior Court judge, Judge Arnason died at the age of 94.²





GEORGE D. CARROLL COURTHOUSE

100 37th Street, Richmond

The George D. Carroll Courthouse in Richmond is a major symbol of the judicial system in West Contra Costa as well as a public building where residents go to serve on juries, handle traffic, unlawful detainer, and small claims matters. It serves the communities of Crockett, El Cerrito, Hercules, Kensington, North Richmond, Pinole, Point Richmond, Port Costa, Richmond, Rodeo, Rollingwood, San Pablo and Tilden Park North.

JUDGE GEORGE D. CARROLL

Judge Carroll was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., served in the U.S. Army during World War II and was stationed overseas in Italy. Judge Carroll graduated from Brooklyn College in 1943 and Brooklyn Law School in 1950, where he was a member of the honor society. He was admitted to the New York Bar in 1950. Judge Carroll worked at Kings County, N.Y. District Attorney’s Office for five years before switching to private practice.

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Courthouses and Namesake Judges

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Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Carroll won a four-year term on the Richmond City Council in 1961. Judge

Carroll was elected as the first black mayor of a major American city and served as the Mayor of the City of Richmond from 1964 to 1965. Judge Carroll was a well-respected community, political, legal and judicial leader in the Richmond and Contra Costa County communities since launching his career in the 1950s and was considered a trailblazer for people of color in the political, legal and judicial communities in West Contra Costa and beyond.

Judge Carroll was a founding member of the Judicial Council of the National Bar Association which is the nation's oldest and largest national association of predominately African-American lawyers and judges. He was also a member of numerous civic and legal organizations including the Charles Houston Bar Association, California Judges Association, American Bar Association, American Judicature Society, World Association of Judges of the World Peace Through Law Center, Board of Governors of the United Bay Area Crusade, Richmond Boys' Club, and the Neighborhood House of North Richmond. He was a life member of the NAACP and the Sigma Pi Phi and Omega Phi Fraternities.

In 1965, Governor Edmund G. Brown appointed George D. Carroll to the Contra Costa Municipal Court, making Judge Carroll the first African American Judge to be appointed in Contra Costa County. Judge Carroll was elected and re-elected in 1970, 1976, and 1982. During his tenure, he turned down a chance to join the Superior Court bench because he wanted to continue serving in Richmond instead of moving to Martinez. "I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth," he said. "I've lived through the best of times and the worst of times" "This city took me in and allowed me to prosper."

Judge Carroll retired in 1985. He died in 2016 at the age of 94³



A.F. BRAY COURTHOUSE

1020 Ward Street, Martinez

The A.F. Bray Building in Martinez houses the Law Library, Jury Services as well as nine courtrooms where general trials and criminal arraignments are heard. The courthouse was named for the former Superior Court Judge and Justice of the Court of Appeal:

JUSTICE A. F. BRAY

Justice Absalom Francis (A.F.) Bray was born in Butte, Montana and came to California in 1904 to attend Mt. Tamalpais Military Academy. Although he received an appointment to West Point, he was just short of meeting the height requirement. Rather than entering that institution when he gained his full height, Bray registered at the University of California where he embarked on a legal career. Upon graduation he studied at Hastings College of the Law, receiving his degree in 1910.



After receiving his law degree, Bray practiced in San Francisco for two years. He then moved to Martinez, joining the firm of J. E. Rodgers, later Rodgers and Bray. In 1914, he became an Assistant District Attorney for Contra Costa County. He also served as City Attorney for Martinez, Concord and Pinole.

In 1935, Governor Merriam appointed A.F. Bray to the Superior Court of Contra Costa County. He served until 1947, when Governor Earl Warren named him Justice of the District Court of Appeal in San Francisco. He became a presiding judge in 1959. Although he officially retired in 1964, Justice Bray remained active, serving part-time both in the appellate court and the Supreme Court until he was 93. His close friend Wakefield Taylor of Martinez, also a retired appellate court justice, said Bray was one of

the state's finest trial judges: A "tremendous individual" who "wrote many significant decisions."

In 1976, he received the University of California Medal as the outstanding living alumnus of Hastings. Justice Bray was an active supporter of the University. He was a past president of the U.C. Berkeley Alumni Association and chairman of the board of Hastings College of the Law.

Justice Bray was instrumental in having the first two bridges built across Carquinez Strait. From the 1880's on, the federal government had opposed attempts to bridge San Francisco Bay and adjacent navigable waters because of the engineering problems involved. Bray, at the time attorney for the American Toll Bridge Company, traveled to Washington, D.C., to convince the authorities the technology to build one was available. Military necessity, he argued, made a connection necessary. Therefore, construction began on a cantilever-type span over Carquinez Strait between Crockett and Vallejo. The second span was the low-grade Southern Pacific railroad bridge connecting Martinez and Benicia, replacing the famous train ferry. In recognition of his contributions toward this achievement, Bray, the Southern Pacific's local counsel, was master of ceremonies at the dedication of the bridge.

Justice Bray died on New Year's Day in 1987. With his keen intellect, spirit of service and breadth of interests, Justice A. F. Bray led a wonderful life and left his mark on Contra Costa County.⁴



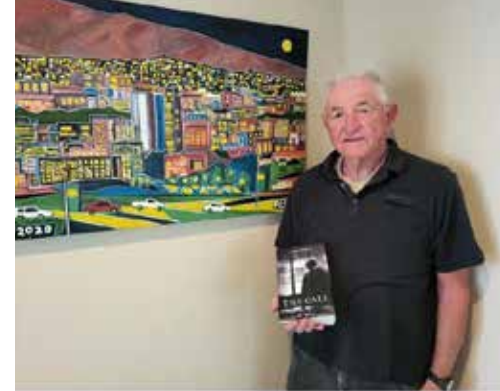
SPINETTA FAMILY LAW CENTER

751 Pine Street, Martinez

The Peter L. Spinetta Family Law Center in Martinez houses five of Contra Costa County's family-law related courtrooms.

JUDGE PETER L. SPINETTA

Judge Peter Spinetta grew up in the Temescal area of Oakland, the son of Italian immigrant parents, and attended Saint Mary's High School. Following the receipt of his bachelor's degree from Saint Mary's College in Philosophy, he attended Yale University, receiving his MA in Political Science, as well as his law degree in 1968.



Harboring latent aspirations of teaching, Judge Spinetta has, over the years, taught a variety of courses in private high schools, San Francisco City College, Laney College, as well as the University of California School of Business.

Upon his admission to the California Bar, Judge Spinetta did a brief stint with the Morrison Foerster office before associating with the Alioto Law Firm in San Francisco, litigating antitrust and business competition cases. In 1971, he became one of the founding partners in Spinetta, Randick & O'Dea in Oakland. He spent the next 18 years litigating business tort and contract cases in state and federal courts with an emphasis on antitrust and Petroleum Marketing Act actions, before being appointed to the Bench in June 1989.

In 1989, Governor George Deukmajian appointed Judge Spinetta to the Contra Costa Superior Court. Prior to taking over Presiding Judge Patsey's fast track department, Judge Spinetta's initial transitional challenge as a new judge was to familiarize himself with criminal sentencing statutes, which he likened to the process of learning future interests in law school. The transition was merely one of law, however, and not philosophy. Judge Spinetta felt that being a judge gave him the opportunity to deal with values of right and wrong in the law versus the advocate's role of achieving a win.

Peter L. Spinetta served as a Contra Costa Superior Court Judge until his retirement in 2007.⁵

1. Source: *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Contra Costa County Law Library*
2. Source: *Bay Area News Group*, *Contra Costa County Law Library*
3. Source: *Bay Area News Group*, *Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors*, *Wikipedia*
4. Source: *Contra Costa County Historical Society*
5. Originally published in June 1991, by Brian P. Evans

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All Rise: Reflections from Newer Judges

by Alice P. Cheng

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to transition into the role of Superior Court Judge in Contra Costa County? I polled some judges appointed over the last three years for their thoughts on the job so far. Thank you to Hon. Jennifer Lee, Hon. H. Glenn Kim, Hon. Ayana K. Young, Hon. Palvir K. Shoker, Hon. Gina Dashman, and Hon. Peter Chang for openly sharing their sentiments. Their reflections may surprise you!



Judge Jennifer Lee accepts the gavel from 2022 CCCBA President David Erb at her investiture June 20, 2022.



Judge Glenn Kim takes the oath of office from Hon. Mary Ann O'Malley at his induction September 9, 2022.



Judge Ayana Lee at her Juneteenth investiture June 16, 2023.



Judge Palvir Shoker at her investiture July 14, 2023



Judge Gina Dashman takes the oath of office from Hon. Jill Fannin at her investiture October 20, 2023.



Judge Peter Chang at his investiture February 9, 2024.

Let's start with something fun: Please describe your favorite part of the job so far.

Judge Lee: One of my favorite parts of the job is the interaction with the public, which includes all the parties and the jurors. I have learned so much from their backgrounds and experiences that has helped me grow as a judge and a person.

Judge Young: I love this job. Really, I do. On Sunday nights, I feel at ease about my work week because I enjoy the work so much. One of my

favorite parts is helping families. I'm in a family law assignment and I am grateful to be a part of so many families resolving their issues. I see many families two or three times after a Request for Order is filed and it brings me so much joy to see them come together, forgive, and let go of pain and resentment to co-parent successfully.

Judge Dashman: I love everything about the job so far, including the people I work with. The lawyers who work incredibly hard, and the juries. It is an honor to do what we do, and I never lose sight of that fact.

Judge Chang: I have enjoyed researching the law and arriving at the correct legal decision after applying the law to the facts.

Judge Shoker: My favorite part of the job is being able to interact with litigants. I feel that I can do more to help litigants and their families when I hear from them directly during our pro-per calendars, and I am able to explain to them how the process works and the reasons for my ruling.

Judge Kim: This is truly a wonderful job. I am blessed and grateful. One

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All Rise

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of my favorite parts is hearing both sides of an argument. I enjoy seeing how strategic some parties are and how the other side responds. I appreciate out-of-the-box arguments, and how parties connect the dots of what originally appeared to be random facts. Another favorite part is working with my co-workers, court staff and judicial colleagues alike. It's a misnomer that this is a lonely job. Our court staff are dedicated, hardworking individuals – they are just good people. I also appreciate the generosity, friendship, and mentoring of my judicial colleagues. We engage in thoughtful discussion about the law, our judicial responsibilities, our families, and we truly support one another.

Please describe an unexpected challenge to the job.

Judge Young: Hands down, night warrant duty. I remember watching movies where the police officer would go to the judge's house in the middle of the night to get a warrant signed. It was cool in the Bad Boys movies, but in real life it definitely presents a challenge to my sleep. Thankfully we don't have nighttime duty very often throughout the year, but because it's such a challenge to my sleep, the dread can overtake my mood some days even if it's scheduled a year out. When the time does come, I realize it's not as bad as I was making it in my head, but it's such a relief when it's over.

Judge Shoker: I joke that I was not prepared for the sleeplessness of the week of Night Warrant and Emergency Protective Order Duty. There is no amount of coffee that can make one alert and clear headed by the third straight night of interrupted sleep.

Judge Kim: As a new judge, it's not easy to see judicial colleagues with over a decade or more of experience and to think of them as peers. It took me some time to get comfortable with calling colleagues by their first names and not by the title "Judge." It has been a challenge to always remember that no matter how many years of judicial experience one has, we are all equals and independent judicial officers. Navigating through that and coming to know that ultimately, my decisions are my own and no one else's, have been challenging.

Judge Chang: I didn't expect judges to take work home so often! Many judges work evenings and weekends to keep up with their busy dockets.

What words of wisdom do you have for members of the CCCBA?

Judge Lee: The work you do matters and makes a difference in the lives of those you serve.

Judge Chang: Be courteous and respectful to opposing counsel, the court staff, and the court. And I always appreciate attorneys who meet and confer on issues before raising them with me.

Judge Kim: Know your judge, ask your colleagues, Google them. Better yet, look them up on the CCCBA website, which is a great resource containing most of the judges' profiles. I'm always impressed with attorneys that have done their homework and come to my courtroom knowing my background, courtroom policies, and expectations of decorum. My biggest tip for young attorneys is to develop, cherish, and guard your reputation, both as a professional and as a person. Great attorneys have reputations that go beyond which side of the courtroom they stand on. They have integrity,

subject matter expertise, are reasonable, respectful, and know how to issue-spot. Great attorneys are zealous advocates who understand that an adversarial process does not need to be a hostile one.

Judge Shoker: We are very fortunate to have an active bar association in our county, so get involved, meet other attorneys, and just always be polite and civil to each other in court. Do not buy into the whole narrative that if you are civil to the opposing side, you are not being aggressive. A great lawyer can be an outstanding advocate and a polite human being at the same time.

Judge Young: CCCBA does a great job of keeping attorneys and the public informed. I often check the website for information myself. As far as tips for practice in my courtroom, meet and confer before you get to court, and remember to be civil towards one another and to the parties.

Thank you again to our judges for participating. Please check out the magazine online for an extended interview.



Alice P. Cheng, Partner at Candelaria LLP, is a Certified Family Law Specialist who handles family law litigation throughout the Bay Area. She also advises clients in mediation, acts as minor's counsel, and as parenting coordinator and referee. She serves as the President Elect of the CCCBA's Family Law Section Board and is a member of this magazine's Editorial Board. She is also the immediate past president of Alameda County Bar Association and on the Earl Warren American Inn of Court Executive Board.

HONORING THE PAST, DRIVING TO THE FUTURE

90TH Anniversary Gala

Saturday, April 13,
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Dinner • Dancing • Silent Auction • History



Photos by Ken Lew Photo
510-552-9871

The Gavel Rests: A Conversation with Our Retired Judges

by Corrine Bielejeski and Marta R. Vanegas

As the sun sets on the illustrious careers of those who have upheld the scales of justice, they enter a new chapter where reflection and wisdom take center stage. We caught up with a handful of legal luminaries who have recently entered the hallowed halls of retirement—to glean insights from their years of service. Now, free from the constraints of the robe, they offer a rare glimpse into our judiciary's inner workings, the weight of their duties, and their personal journeys.

We always wonder how it is to step into the role of a judge from being an advocate. What was it like for you to pull up to the courthouse for the first time as a judge?

Hon. Barry Baskin: It was very intimidating at first when I was assigned to a criminal courthouse,

as I came from a civil litigation background. It was also very satisfying having reached this point as a foreign born and trained attorney.

Hon. Anita Santos: It was surreal, exciting and intimidating, all at once, but the best part was finally getting a prime parking spot. Like when I got married (both times), I laughed, in near disbelief, every day for at least a month.

We also would like to know about the other bookend of your judicial careers. What was it like hearing your last calendar?

Hon. Jill Fannin: Bittersweet and emotional. After more than 20 years on the bench, it really hit me that I would not be working with my fantastic staff anymore and I would no longer be part of the ritual of court.

Judge Santos: Sad at the loss of the daily connections with colleagues and staff that became like family, a huge stress lift, and also filled with the excitement of the next phase of life.



Judge Baskin: It was sad because I enjoyed my civil assignment and calendar. It was hard making the decision to walk away from my colleagues, staff and counsel I had come know over many years.

Here is another doozy that came from our readers. What was your favorite assignment on the bench? Why?

Hon. Leslie Landau: I loved being a judge, and enjoyed every assignment I had. But family law and

juvenile were my most meaningful assignments. Both were intensely people-focused and forward-looking: the judge's task was to understand family challenges, and help families address them and move into a more productive future. It required a unique mix of head and heart, instinct and intellect. The cases could be difficult, but it was immensely satisfying to make a difference in people's (especially children's) lives.

Judge Santos: Having the benefit of hindsight, I have a three-way tie for my favorite assignment: family law, felony criminal trials and domestic violence. Each of those assignments has a profound impact on the parties involved (and their children) and is a critical service.



Judge Fannin: My assignments in criminal, juvenile, family, civil and PJ, were all great in their own ways. My favorite part of each was trying to work things out "in the back" with the lawyers, parties or staff. There were lots of opportunities for collaboration and settlement in every assignment but especially in civil, family and juvenile.

Judge Baskin: Civil litigation because counsel are so professional, courteous and well prepared with very few exceptions. Resolving my harder civil cases before trial was particularly rewarding.

Did anything particularly memorable (and not otherwise confidential) happen during your career?

Judge Baskin: I was the Presiding Judge when COVID first broke out. I will never forget the long hours researching what to do as nobody had ever done this before. We were the first county in the state to totally

close the court, except for emergency matters. Working with the Chief Justice, the Judicial Council and all the Presiding Judges to find a way to reopen the courts and restart jury trials was especially challenging but rewarding.



Judge Santos: First, the pandemic and navigating and conducting hearings and jury trials, alongside family demands -- including a back porch student hub. Second, an irate, explosive defendant in a criminal trial that resulted in the bailiff and I physically restraining him when all others fled the courtroom. Third, the most sincere and heartfelt gratitude of counsel, the accused, victims, and the jurors at the conclusion of a trial.

Judge Landau: There were so many memorable moments. Some were amusing (like the DUI and hit-and-run trial, with jurors named Fender and Bender). Some were inspiring (like the hard work parents in juvenile dependency court did to reunify with their children). Some were agonizing (like the victim impact statements in sexual assault and homicide cases). Being a judge meant having a front row seat to humanity, in all its complexity, heartbreak and hope.

What are you doing to fill your time these days?

Judge Fannin: I am working at JAMS. I worked there as a mediator before I joined the Bench, and I am thrilled to return.

Judge Baskin: Working as a mediator and arbitrator at JAMS is satisfying, being the culmination of almost 50 years of learning the law.



Judge Landau: Judging was often like drinking out of a firehose: the volume of cases and pace were punishing, and I always wished I had more time. I was ready for a change, but still love the challenge of resolving legal issues, working with fine attorneys, and helping people solve problems. So, I have joined ADR Services, Inc., doing mediation, arbitration and private judging. I love that I now have the luxury of time to devote to a smaller docket of cases, and give parties and issues the attention they need and deserve. And, of course, the time to hike with my dog.

Judge Santos: Traveling, Pilates, daily Uber services for our teen daughter for three more months, working (a little) at ADR Services, Inc., doing family law mediating and private judging.

Here is a loaded question. What, if anything, would you do differently?

Judge Baskin: Nothing. I have no regrets and only very fond memories.

Judge Santos: I would take the lunch-time walk more frequently, learn and master artificial intelligence as a tool to assist with our court administration, court access and research, and I would step out of my comfort zone and try a new assignment (e.g., probate).

What advice would you give to attorneys that maybe you couldn't give while you were a judge?

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The Gavel Rests

Continued from page 17

Judge Santos: First, enjoy what you do, or do something else. Second, your reputation for integrity, professionalism and preparedness is everything. Third, have a family (pets count), and balance. Fourth, surround yourself only with people that support and inspire you.

Judge Baskin: Always seek feedback on your performance whenever you can. You will be surprised by what you can learn but most counsel feel too vulnerable or don't think they need the feedback.

Judge Landau: Be the grease, not the grit, in the wheels of justice. Don't get sucked into your client's drama, or create drama yourself: Cooperate with opposing counsel, facilitate discovery, manage client expectations, solve problems creatively, and avoid ad hominem attacks on the opposing party and counsel. And remember that judges are busy: Resolve issues that really don't need judicial determination, and as to those matters that do, distill your facts and arguments so judges have what they need (and no more than they need) to quickly understand the issues and decide them well.

Judge Fannin: Don't forget to have fun! We have serious, stressful jobs but life is sweeter when you make room to see the humor in a situation and enjoy yourself with colleagues.



Corrine Bielejeski owns East Bay Bankruptcy Law & Financial Planning in Brentwood. She served as law clerk to the Hon. Edward D. Jellen (ret.) in

the Oakland Bankruptcy Court before entering private practice. She is a CEB update author, former co-chair of the Bankruptcy Court's Bench-Bar Liaison Committee, and a member of the Contra Costa Lawyer editorial board. She regularly speaks on bankruptcy issues.



Marta R. Vanegas works at the California Department of Justice as a Deputy Attorney General for the Employment and Administrative Mandate

Unit, representing state agencies in employment lawsuits and administrative writ proceedings. Marta earned her law degrees from the University of California—Davis School of Law and from ELTE University of Budapest, Hungary. Marta also has an L.L.M. in International Business Law. Prior to serving at the Attorney General's Office, Marta practiced employment and civil rights litigation at her eponymous firm, Vanegas Law Group.

The opinions, views, or beliefs expressed are Marta's alone, and do not represent the views of the California Department of Justice.

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The Contra Costa Legal Community —Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow

by Hon. Richard Flier
(Retired)

It was my first day of work at the Contra Costa District Attorney's Office in October 1973. As I drove through the Caldecott tunnel on my way to Martinez, I would learn the entire legal community had been in a state of flux since 1953.

The first clue was my office on the fourth floor of the Taylor Courthouse was down a flight of stairs. In 1934, the Courthouse was three stories, and the jury deliberation room was on the top floor with a skylight for a ceiling¹

I was given a Penal Code that first day which was three-quarters of an inch thick. When I left the office in 1985, the Penal Code was three inches thick. In addition to changing from an indeterminate sentencing system to a determinative sentencing system in 1977 it seemed that many legislators in Sacramento sponsored various bills to be able to brand themselves as "Law & Order" legislators.

In 1973, the Superior Court Bench was composed of eleven "mature" men. (All were in their late forties, fifties and sixties). This was an increase from two judges in 1934. The Superior Court system with Justice Courts had changed little since its inception in 1880. There were a number of justices of the peace throughout the county. These men were not necessarily lawyers, but they held court and dispensed justice at the community level.

As a result of the post World War II boom in the Bay Area, in 1953 the first Municipal Court was established in Richmond, the center of the county's legal community at the time. This was followed by four additional Municipal Courts in 1969². By 1972 all of the Justice Courts were eliminated by these Municipal Courts. In 1998, the Superior Court judges and the Municipal Court judges voted to consolidate the Municipal Courts into the Superior Court and Municipal Courts were

replaced by limited jurisdiction Superior Courts.

Shortly after my arrival in 1973, the District Attorney's Office opened a new branch office across from the Concord Municipal Court on Parkside Drive. This office relieved the over-crowding at the Martinez District Attorney's office, but this Concord Office was closed after the Concord Municipal Court buildings were burned to the ground by a disgruntled litigant.

I learned after my arrival that "elections" had played a significant role in changing the public law community in our county. In 1958, John Nejedly won the election for District Attorney on a platform of "Full Time District Attorneys." Up to that time, Deputy District Attorneys were allowed to maintain a private civil practice when they were not prosecuting crime. Nejedly eliminated this practice.

The County was also represented in civil matters by the District Attorney. In 1969, these attorneys were separated from the District Attorney's Office to establish the County Counsel's Office. Contra Costa became one of the last larger counties in the state to eliminate the joint civil and criminal functions in the District Attorney's office.

About the same time the Public Defender's Office was established. *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963) had affirmed the right to legal representation in criminal matters. Before the Public Defender's office opened, judges would randomly appoint attorneys to represent unrepresented defendants from any attorney

present in the courtroom when the defendant requested one.

The other election which had a considerable impact on our legal community was Jerry Brown's election as Governor in 1975. Governor Brown realized he could have a significant impact on the court system by appointing diverse and younger attorneys. In 1977, Patricia Herron became the first woman appointed to the Superior Court. Ellen James and Patricia McKinley were appointed to the Municipal Court when they were under the age of 40.

Subsequent governors have followed this practice and during the 85th anniversary of the CCCBA the Superior Court was composed of 17 men and 22 women. Today, we have a significant diversity of races and heritages on the bench.

The bench and bar when I started my D.A. position in 1973 was a very congenial group. It was common for judges, attorneys, court reporters, clerks and bailiffs to come together for large holiday gatherings. It was not unusual for trial opponents to visit Paul's Restaurant in Martinez when the trial was over and have friendly talks. In the same vein, misdemeanor pretrials were discussed by the Deputy DA and PD at Harrington's in Walnut

Creek. If you had court in Pittsburg, Judge Rose would invite the attorneys involved in a concluded case or calendar to join him for lunch at one of his many favorite "five-star restaurants." In all honesty, this practice put our opponents on a human level, and we could trust each other even though we were advocates.

The court process has also experienced major changes. We had always used a master calendar system where the Presiding Judge would call the trial calendar for criminal and civil matters on Monday morning. Criminal cases were assigned first, and civil cases would trail and go out if departments were available. All law and motion matters were assigned to one judge, Martin Rothenberg³, and when he retired, two judges heard them. By the mid-1980's, there was a civil case backlog. Civil attorneys began working on ways to reduce their numbers. Attorneys volunteered their time to evaluate pending cases and determine which were still active. They set up bench bar settlement conferences which resulted in a very high percentage of settlements, but there was still a backlog.

As a result, the state Judicial Council felt more drastic measures were warranted to reduce the backlog

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Judges of the Superior Court in late 1972. *Left to right:* S.C. Masterson, Richard E. Arnason, Max Wilcox, Jr., Jackson C. Davis, Martin E. Rothenberg, Norman Gregg, Robert J. Cooney, Thomas F. McBride, William R. Channell, Coleman F. Fannin. Photo courtesy of Judge B. Goode (Ret.)

The Legal Community

Continued from page 21

and provide access to justice. Contra Costa County became one of a few counties in California selected to create a Civil Fast Track program. The guidelines called for a system in which over 90% of cases were resolved within one year of the initial filing. All of the cases were to be resolved in two years of filing. Four judges⁴ were assigned to this program handling all civil cases except family law and probate. Each judge was assigned 25% of all new cases and also handled his/her law and motion matters and trial calendar. Much to our amazement, after a few years, the Fast Track judges were complying with the guidelines. The system involved constant monitoring by the judges using “Case Management Conferences.” Attorneys had to serve their complaints, perform discovery, and pursue defaults if defendants failed to answer. The system worked because the judges took control of their cases from filing until judgment.

The remaining problem was with the backlog of cases on file before Fast Track began. With the assistance of Judge James Marchiano (Ret.), several methods of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) were created with their own acronyms such as EASE, TOT, SCAN, SMART and JOLT⁵. The most inventive was TOT (Trials on Time). Counsel would agree to try their case before an experienced attorney if all counsel agreed. Ultimately, the backlog was resolved.

Court security came to the fore with two fatal shootings at the courthouse involving two family law matters, arson at several courthouses and other unsettling situations.⁶ Although there was reluctance to put up screening stations,

we all acknowledged that in a turbulent, unpredictable society, it was the minimum the court could do to ensure safety at the courthouse. In the last few years of the century, screening check points became part of our lives in each of the courthouses.⁷

Associate Justice Benjamin Cardozo observed “History, in illuminating the past illuminates the present, and in illuminating the present, illuminates the future.” When I began work in Contra Costa in 1973, the courts, the systems and the people were everything I had envisioned about a legal community. In a short time, the courts dramatically changed their appearance, structure, function and process. The current system with computers, email, electronic filing, and Zoom court appearances requires a “21st century person” to feel comfortable. However, when I think of my first office downstairs in the four-story building that used to be a three-story building, I realized that things in the present were based upon the past. Things in the present, the good and bad, were going to dictate the future. As we celebrate the Bar Association’s 90th anniversary we can visualize more efficient processes, broadened access (actual and virtual), more forgiving electronic filing, and a system sensitive to the humanity of our work. Hopefully, our association will play a significant role in making this happen. Justice Cardozo will be watching.

¹ It was customary practice for attorneys to go up to the roof and listen to their deliberating jury through the skylight.

² These new courts were Concord, San Pablo, Walnut Creek, and River

³ Judge Rothenberg, Department 7, was so revered and feared that civil attorneys created a prayer, to wit, “Our father, who art in seven, Rothenberg be his name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in seven!”

⁴ Judges Phelan, Patsy, James & Flier

⁵ Acronyms defined: EASE – Extra Assistance to Settle Early; SCAN – Summary Case Assessment by Neutrals; TOT – Trials On Time; SMART – Special Mediator Activity Resolving Trials; JOLT – Judges On Long Trials.

⁶ Both shootings involved Family Law litigants. Another case involved a defendant who hid a revolver in his jacket. An alert bailiff found it during a pat search. Another case involved rival gangs whose members were involved in a criminal prosecution.

⁷ The partial burning of the Clerk’s Office in the Taylor Building lead to other developments. (1). Files were partially burned around the edges. (2). During repair and construction judges and court rooms were moved to Hilson’s Department Store, Veterans’ Building and Child Support Building. (3). During the cleaning of the second floor foyer, over half century of dust and dirt was removed to reveal beautiful decorations and base reliefs. (4). Some resources were used to help finance the new Family Law Building.

The Honorable Richard Flier (Ret.)
was a Superior Court judge elected to the bench in 1984 for the term commencing on January 7, 1985. He was reelected in 1990, 1996 and 2002. Prior to his service on the bench, he was a Deputy District Attorney in Contra Costa County from 1973 to 1985. Currently he serves as a mediator, arbitrator and court appointed referee for ADR Services, Inc.



A Complete List of the Judges in Contra Costa County and their Dates of Service

The list of Superior Court judges includes some who started out in Municipal Court. This consolidation was the result of a state initiative in the June 2, 1998 election.

* indicates the date the judge was elevated to a higher court

District Judges

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| John Watson 1850-1851 | 6. Alfred Bailey Mckenzie
1914- 1935 | 20. Joseph Genser
1963 - 1972 |
| Craven P. Hester 1851-1853 | | |
| Elisha McKinstry 1853 - 1863 | 7. Henry V. Alvarado
1923 - 1932 | 21. Robert J. Cooney
1964 - 1985 |
| Thomas A. Brown . . . 1863 - 1865 | | |
| Samuel H. Dwinelle . . 1865-1879 | 8. Thomas D. Johnston
1932 - 1941 | 22. Thomas Francis McBride
1965 - 1981 |

County Judges

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| F. M. Warmcastle 1850- 1854 | 10. Harold Jacoby
1941 - 1959 | 24. Samuel Conti
1967 - 1970 |
| J. F. Williams 1854 - 1854 | | |
| R. N. Woods 1854- 1855 | 11. Homer W. Patterson
1945 - 1967 | 25. William R. Channell
1970 - 1984 |
| George F. Worth 1855 - 1856 | | |
| Thomas A. Brown
1856 - 1864 and 1874-1880 | 12. Hugh H. Donovan
1947 - 1963 | 26. Max Wilcox, Jr.
1971- 1987 |
| Mark Shepard 1863- 1870 | 13. Wakefield Taylor
1951 - 1963* | 27. Jackson C. Davis
1971 - 1977 |
| Cyrus W. Lander 1870 - 1874 | 14. Nonnan A Gregg
1951 - 1980 | 28. Coleman Ferrell Fannin, Jr.
1972 - 1988 |

Superior Court Judges

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Thomas Allen Brown
1880- 1886 | 15. Thomas F. Fraga
1957 - 1971 | 29. Sam Hall
1972 - 1981 |
| 2. Francis M. Warmcastle
1886- 1886 | 16. Betsy FitzGerald Rahn
1958 (Muni)-1979 | 30. Richard Patrick Calhoun
1973 - 1980 |
| 3. Joseph P. Jones
1886 - 1900 | 17. Martin E. Rothenberg
1959 - 1982 | 31. Bessie Dreibelbis
1973 (Muni)- 1993 |
| 4. William Sewall Wells
1900 - 1909 | 18. Salathiel Charles Masterson
1959 - 1972 | 32. John C. Minney
1975 (Muni) 1987 (Sup) - 2006 |
| 5. Randall H. Lattimer
1908- 1923 | 19. Richard E. Arnason
1963 - 1995 | 33. Ellen Patricia Herron
1977 - 1987 |

Continued on page 24 ►

Judges

Continued from page 23

34. **David A Dolgin**
1977 - 1993
35. **Mark Simons**
1980 (Muni) 1987 (Sup) - 1995*
36. **Richard L. Patsey**
1980 - 1989
37. **Wayne A. Westover, Jr.**
1980 - 1998
38. **Norman Spellberg**
1980 - 1991
39. **Gary E. Strankman**
1980 - 1988*
40. **Robert G. McGrath**
1982 - 1999
41. **Ellen S. James**
1982 - 1997
42. **Patricia McKinley**
1982 (Muni) - 1986
43. **Edward L. Merrill**
1982 - 1996
44. **Walter Rogers**
1982 (Muni) 1998 (Sup) - 2002
45. **David E. Pesonen**
1983 - 1984
46. **Dennis Cunningham**
1983 (Muni) 1998 (Sup) - 2005
47. **Richard S. Flier**
1985 - 2005
48. **William A. O'Malley**
1984 - 1994
49. **John Allen**
1984 (Muni) 1998 (Sup) - 2004
50. **Michael J. Phelan**
1985 - 1992*
51. **Douglas E. Swager**
1987 - 1995*
52. **Garrett J. Grant**
1987 (Muni) 1997 (Sup) - 2005
53. **Bruce Van Voorhis**
1976 (Muni) 1998 (Sup) - 2003
54. **Merle Eaton**
1987 (Muni) 1998 (Sup) - 2006
55. **James J. Marchiano**
1988 - 1998*
56. **Peter L. Spinetta**
1989 - 2007
57. **Patricia K. Sepulveda**
1989 - 1998*
58. **Irene Takahashi**
1989-1991
59. **James R. Trembath**
1990 - 2003
60. **Harlan Grossman**
1991 (Muni) 1998 (Sup) - 2012
61. **John Van de Poel**
1992 -
62. **Lois Haight**
1993 - 2019
63. **Ignazio John Ruvolo**
1994 - 1996*
64. **Peter Berger**
1994 (Muni) 1998 (Sup) - 2012
65. **Barbara Ann Zuniga**
1994 - 2014
66. **William Kolin**
1994 (Muni) 1998 (Sup) - 2013
67. **Bruce Mills**
1995 (Muni) 1998 (Sup) - 2018
68. **Diana Becton**
1995 (Muni) 1998 (Sup) - 2017
69. **Laurel S. Brady (Lindenbaum)**
1996 (Muni) 1998 (Sup) - 2024
70. **Maria Rivera**
1997 - 2002*
71. **David Bernard Flinn**
1997 - 2014
72. **Judy S. Craddick**
1997 - 2018
73. **Gerald Belleci**
1998 - 1998
74. **Michael Coleman**
1998 - 2013
75. **Joni Hiramoto**
1998 - in office
76. **Joyce Cram**
1998 - 2013
77. **Mary Ann O'Malley**
1998 - in office
78. **Terrence L. Bruniers**
1998 - 2009*
79. **Steven K. Austin**
1998 - 2022
80. **Tom Maddock**
1998 - 2017
81. **George Spanos**
2000 - 2017
82. **John Kennedy**
2001 - in office
83. **Barry Baskin**
2002 - 2022
84. **Cheryl Mills**
2002 - 2022
85. **Theresa Canepa**
2002 - 2023



- 86. **John Sugiyama**
2002 - 2020
- 87. **Leslie Landau**
2003- 2023
- 88. **Jill Fannin**
2003 - 2024
- 89. **Nancy Davis Stark**
2004 - 2023
- 90. **Susanne Fenstermacher**
2005 -2024
- 91. **Charles Treat**
2005 - in office
- 92. **Charles Burch**
2005 - in office
- 93. **Lewis Davis**
2005 - 2022
- 94. **Patricia Scanlon**
2005 - in office
- 95. **John Laettner**
2006 - 2019
- 96. **Brian Haynes**
2007- in office
- 97. **Clare Maier**
2007 - 2024
- 98. **Barbara Hinton**
2008 - in office
- 99. **Trevor White**
2008 - 2017
- 100. **Edward Weil**
2009 - in office
- 101. **Rebecca Hardie**
2010 - in office
- 102. **Christopher Bowen**
2010 - in office
- 103. **Judy Johnson**
2012 - 2022
- 104. **Terri Mockler**
2012 - in office
- 105. **John Cope**
2013 - in office
- 106. **Danielle Douglas**
2014 - in office
- 107. **Anita Santos**
2014 - 2022
- 108. **David Goldstein**
2015 - in office
- 109. **Benjamin Reyes, II**
2017 - in office
- 110. **Wade Rhyne**
2017 - in office
- 111. **Virginia George**
2017 - in office
- 112. **Leonard Marquez**
2018 - in office
- 113. **John Devine**
2018 - in office
- 114. **Wendy Coats**
2018 - in office
- 115. **Julia Campins**
2019 - in office
- 116. **Linda Lye**
2020 - 2021
- 117. **Jennifer Lee**
2021 - in office
- 118. **Kirk Athanasiou**
2021 - in office
- 119. **Glenn Kim**
2021 - in office
- 120. **Colleen Gleason**
2022 - in office
- 121. **Ayana Young**
2022 - in office
- 122. **Shara Beltramo**
2022 - in office

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Judges

Continued from page 25

123. **Frank Riebli**
2023 - in office
124. **Palvir Shoker**
2023 - in office
125. **Gina Dashman**
2023 - in office
126. **Peter Chang**
2023 - in office
127. **Melissa O'Connell**
2023 - in office
128. **Jesse Jen-Yen Hseih**
2024 - in office
129. **Nichelle Holmes**
2024 - in office
130. **Stephanie Clarke**
2024 - in office


Contra Costa Lawyer magazine expresses heartfelt thanks to the Contra Costa County Historical Society for their help in compiling this list and scanning so many historical photos in this issue.

If you find an error or omission in this list, please contact Carole Lucido, CCCBA Communications Director with updated information at clucido@cccba.org or (925) 370-2542.

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Retiring Judges: Donate Your Papers to CCCHS

The Contra Costa County Historical Society is the county's official archive. It has extensive judicial materials and encourages retiring judges to consider donating their papers, photos and/or books for the sake of history.

CCCHS, founded in 1951 by Louis L. Stein and Justice A.F. Bray, is an independent non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve, protect and provide public access to the records and heritage of Contra Costa County. Their archive proudly houses newspapers and newspaper clippings, photographs, maps, books, government records and reports, court case files and family papers from prominent local families and community members, dating back to the founding of our state.

The Contra Costa County Historical Society is always interested in collecting memorabilia from retired judges in Contra Costa County. They also are working on a collection of oral histories that demonstrate how the work of the court has evolved and changed over the years. If you are a retired judge who has papers or stories you would like to share, please contact LeighAnn Davis at director@cocohistory.org.



By Lorraine M. Walsh

As we celebrate the Contra Costa County Bar Association's 90th Anniversary, we have put together a list of interesting fun facts about our county, our judges and our courts.

DID YOU KNOW that:

1. Contra Costa means "opposite coast" in Spanish. The county was given this name because it sits on the opposite coast of San Francisco, the most populous city at the time.

2. Contra Costa County was one of the original 27 counties in California created in 1850 at the time of statehood. The original courthouse in Martinez was condemned following the 1868 Hayward fault earthquake and a replacement courthouse was built in 1901. It is now known as the "Finance Building" which is the name etched atop the building's four roman columns.

3. Mt. Diablo, which is featured in the bar association's logo, is the highest peak in our county at 3,849 feet. The summit of the mountain is the origin of the Meridian and base line land surveys for most of California and western Nevada. It is used as the baseline for real property legal descriptions.

4. In February 2024, the Executive Office of Immigration Review, a division of the Department of Justice which oversees immigration cases, opened a new immigration court. Ten new courtrooms have been set-up in the Gateway building in

Concord to hear immigration cases from Contra Costa County and nine other counties.

5. Betsy FitzGerald Rahn born



February 15, 1912 in Springfield Illinois was an attorney admitted to practice in California and Hawaii and was at Pearl Harbor on the

day of "infamy," December 7, 1941. She moved to Walnut Creek in 1947 and became the county's first female judge. She heard cases in the Walnut Creek Justice Court which later became the Municipal Court. The courthouse, which was demolished, was located on Locust Street where there is now a multi-plex movie theater.

6. Contra Costa County Superior Court has an appellate division consisting of three superior court judges who hear appeals from traffic/infraction cases, appeal of limited jurisdiction civil cases and selected extraordinary writs. The

[Continued on page 28](#) ▶

Fun Facts

Continued from page 27

rules which govern the appellate division can be found in Local Rules 4.64 (appeal of an infraction) and 8.1 (appellate division).

7. Juvenile court cases which are now consolidated in the Walnut Creek courthouse were once heard in many locations throughout the county including the basement of the County Health Department in Richmond, at an office in the Delta Fair shopping mall in Antioch and at the Juvenile Hall Detention facility on Glacier Drive in Martinez. Some of the court commissioners/referees who heard these cases include Bruce Stirling, Larry Katz and Steve Easton.

8. The District Attorney's office was once located on the fourth floor of the Courthouse on Main and Court Streets. Inmates were housed in the old brick jail on Pine Street and walked over to court in their orange jumpsuits. The current District Attorney Diana Becton is the first woman African American to serve in this office since it was established in 1850.

9. The Courthouse on Main and Court Streets had a "snack bar" in the basement. During the morning and afternoon court breaks it was packed with attorneys, bailiffs, clerks and litigants.

10. Paul's Restaurant was a well known and frequent spot for attorneys and judges for lunch, dinner or a drink. It was opened in 1928 by Paul Pagnini in the Kelly mansion and existed for over 50 years on the 1200 block of Alhambra Blvd in Martinez until it burned down in the 1980s. In an article about the fire in the San Francisco Examiner, Mr. Pagnini is quoted that diners included Clark



Gable, Bing Crosby, Governors James Rolph and Goodwin Knight and even Chief Justice Earl Warren.

11. As part of the 1880 revision of the California Constitution, the Superior Court system was created. In Contra Costa there was initially one court with one department. As the population increased during World War II and the Kaiser ship building boom in Richmond, the first Municipal Court was created in the City of Richmond in 1953. By 1969 five Municipal Courts were in operation in Concord, Richmond, San Pablo, Walnut Creek and Pittsburg. In the early 1990s, the San Pablo branch was merged into the Richmond courthouse and called the Bay Municipal Court. In 1998, the Municipal Courts were abolished and we now have one unified Superior Court with courthouses in Martinez, Richmond, Walnut Creek and Pittsburg.

12. Contra Costa County Superior Courts have been the venue of several high profile criminal and civil cases. In 1971, Judge Richard Arnason was specially assigned to the Marin County Superior Court to hear the Angela Davis/San Quentin "Six" murder case and made several significant pre-trial orders. Public Defender Suzanne Chapot defended Glenn Helzer in the murder of an elderly Concord couple and Selena Bishop, the daughter of musician Elvin Bishop. A multi-party complex personal injury lawsuit was filed in Contra Costa County involving the December 24, 1985 plane crash into the Sun Valley shopping mall. Three people died and over 40 were injured

when a plane on its approach to Buchanan Airport on a foggy evening crashed into the mall and exploded into a fireball at the height of the Christmas shopping season.

13. Contra Costa County Superior Court Judges who have been appointed to the First District Court of Appeal include:

A. F. Bray, Wakefield Taylor, Gary Strankman, William Channel, Douglas Swager, Patricia Sepulveda, Maria Rivera, Mark Simons, James Marchiano, Ignacio Ruvolo, and Terence Bruiniers.

14. As of 2019, all of the county's public attorney offices which include County Counsel, the District Attorney and the Public Defender were led by female attorneys for the first time in their history. They included Sharon Anderson (County Counsel) Diana Becton (District Attorney) and Robin Lipetzky (Public Defender).

15. Contra Costa County is home to the most national parks in the United States. They include the John Muir Historic Site and Residence in Martinez, the Eugene O'Neill/Tao House Historic Site in Danville, the Port Chicago National Historic Site in Port Chicago and the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Historic Site in Richmond. All of these national parks commemorate historic events and individuals who lived or worked in our county.

Lorraine Walsh has lived in Contra Costa County for 60 years. Her family moved to Danville in 1964 and she started elementary school at Montair. She is proud to call it "home." She has practiced law for 42 years. She opened her law office in Walnut Creek in 1998. She is a State Bar Certified Specialist in Legal Malpractice law handling controversies between lawyers and clients.

CALENDAR

UPCOMING EVENTS | OVERVIEW

The Contra Costa County Bar Association certifies that the MCLE activities listed on pages 28 and 29 have been approved for the specific MCLE credit indicated, by the State Bar of

May 1 | Senior Section

Law Day 2024 - Voices of Democracy with Congressman Garamendi

(Hybrid)

Speakers: Congressman John Garamendi | Hon. Richard Flier (Ret.)

Noon – 1:30 pm | 1 hour General MCLE credit | Free for all

May 3 | Solo/Small Firm Section

2nd Annual SOLO/SMALL FIRM SECTION SUMMIT

Thriving in Turbulence (Hybrid)

Speakers: Hon. Benjamin T. Reyes, II | Natasha S. Chee | Dan Defay | Aaron Feldman | Mary Grace Guzman | Terry R. Leoni | Ken Satkunam | Lorraine Walsh

11:30 am – 6:00 pm | 1 hour Elimination of Bias; 1 hour General; 1 hour Legal Ethics; 1 hour Technology in the Practice of Law MCLE credit | Lafayette Library, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette | \$50 for members of the Solo/Small Firm Section, \$75 CCCBA members and \$125 nonmembers

May 7 | Estate Planning & Probate Section

31st Annual Estate Planning Symposium (Hybrid)

Session 1: Elder Abuse – Signs to Watch For
Speaker: Scott Heisey, Stewart Title of California Inc.

Session 2: Haggerty v. Thornton – The Effects on Estate Planning and Trust Administration

Speaker: Jaime B. Herren, Hartog, Baer Zabronsky, APC

1:00 pm – 6:00 pm | 1.5 hours Estate Planning & Probate Specialization and General MCLE credit | Leshner Center for the Arts, Margaret Leshner Theatre, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek | \$65 for members of the Barristers Section, law students and legal support members, \$75 members of the Estate Planning & Probate Section, \$90 CCCBA members, \$95 nonmembers

Sponsored by: Mechanics Bank Wealth Management

May 14 | Women's Section

Women's Section Annual Scholarship Fundraiser

(In Person)

5:30 pm – 8:00 pm | Contra Costa Country Club, 801 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill | \$65 for Women's Section members, \$75 CCCBA members, \$85 nonmembers

Sponsors: Law Offices of Nancy Gibbons Weed Law Group, PC | M.S. Domingo Law Group | Ferber Law | Livingston Law Firm | Pamela Ross Legal Services, PC | Law Offices of Victoria Robinson Smith

May 15 | Appellate & Litigation Sections

Effective Written Advocacy: Tips, Tricks and Tragedies

(Webinar)

Speakers: Hon. Leslie Landau (Ret.) | Patrick Burns | Claudia Long

Noon – 1:15 pm | 1 hour General MCLE credit | \$15 for members of the Appellate and Litigation Sections, Free for Law Students, \$30 CCCBA members, \$45 nonmembers

May 21 | DEI Committee

From Labels to Layers: Building Bridges Beyond Bias (Hybrid)

Speakers: Hon. Dorothy Proudfoot | Renee Welze Livingston | Natasha Chee

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm | 1 hour Implicit Bias MCLE credit | CCCBA 1st Floor Conference Room, 2300 Clayton Road, Concord | \$20 CCCBA members, \$35 nonmembers

For more information on these programs, please contact Sarah Marin

CCCBA Program Coordinator at smarin@cccba.org or (925) 849-8849 or check the calendar www.cccba.org/attorney-events

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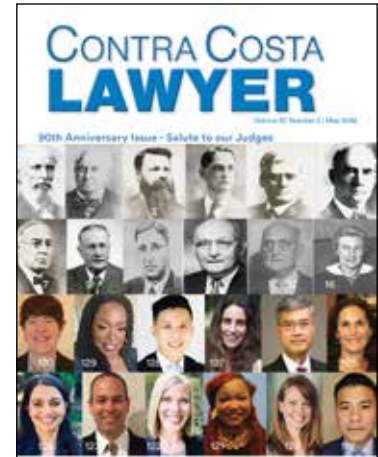
Interested? Call Stan Pedder or MacKenzie Bush at (925) 283-6816.

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Did you know that you can run classified ads in Contra Costa Lawyer and also on the CCCBA website? Classified ads run on the CCCBA website for 30 days. Members pay just \$75 per month for online classified ads that can include photos or graphics. For information, please contact Carole Lucido, CCCBA Communications Director at (925) 370-2542 or clucido@cccba.org.

Advertising Opportunities

Contra Costa Lawyer Magazine - Print and Online



May 23 | Intellectual Property Section

AI Unleashed: Navigating Fair Use in the Copyright Landscape (Zoom Meeting)

Speaker: Natasha S. Chee

Noon – 1:15 pm | 1 hour Technology in the Practice of Law MCLE credit | Free for members of the Intellectual Property Section, \$15 Barristers and Legal Support members, \$20 CCCBA members, \$35 nonmembers

June 8 | DEI Committee

Juneteenth Celebration

(In Person)

You're invited to this celebration filled with vibrant music, delectable soul food, engaging activities for the kids, and a whole lot more. Get ready to immerse yourself in the rich history and joyous spirit of Juneteenth!

Noon – 4:00 pm | Pleasant Hill Park, 147 Gregory Lane, Picnic Area 3, Pleasant Hill | Free

Sponsors: Candelaria, LLC | JAMS | Ferber Law | Law Offices of Tanya R. Brown, PC | Miller Starr Regalia | Womble Bond Dickinson

June 27 | CCCBA & Barristers Section

All Section Summer Mixer

(In Person)

5:30 pm – 8:00 pm | Hazy Barbecue, 200 Hartz Ave., Danville | Free for CCCBA members, \$25 nonmembers

More information TBA

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The Contra Costa Lawyer is the official publication of the Contra Costa County Bar Association. It is published every other month for an audience of more than 1,500 attorneys, judges and court officials, law libraries and public officials involved with the administration of justice in Contra Costa County and has a readership of approximately 4,500 online.

Both the print and online editions of Contra Costa Lawyer have won awards of excellence from the National Association of Bar Executives.

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View and download the complete media kit at www.cccba.org/flyer/2024/cccba-adkit-2024.pdf

Contact CCCBA Communications Director Carole Lucido if you have questions, clucido@cccba.org or (925) 370-2542.



Contra Costa County Bar Association

We gratefully acknowledge our

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