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Hon. Mary Thornton House

Los Angeles County Superior Court, Retired

Judge House recently retired after 22 years on the Los Angeles Superior Court, where she presided over countless jury and court trials in the Civil and Probate departments. With experience serving as the Supervising Judge of the Northeast and North Central districts, Hub Operations and Assistant Supervising Judge of Civil countywide, Judge House brings a unique and in-depth understanding of all aspects of civil case processing and case values. She is touted for her calm demeanor and unbending graciousness to all that appeared in front of her, as well as her extraordinary and relentless, common-sense approach to settling cases.

Practice Areas

Probate, Family Law, Law and Motion, Civil Litigation including personal injury, medical and legal malpractice, real property, employment, business and contract disputes, governmental liability with expertise in police civil rights and excessive force actions

Conflict Resolution Experience

Judge House was the first Municipal Court Judge to become a Supervising Judge for the Superior Court in the Northeast District. Elevated in 2000, she presided over mandatory settlement conferences in both limited and general civil matters, reducing the civil caseloads throughout the Northeast and North Central Districts.

In 2004, she moved to a Civil direct calendar court at the Mosk Courthouse, handling civil matters including personal injury, contract, employment, professional malpractice, asbestos and products liability. She routinely conducted successful settlement conferences for her colleagues and her own matters. She returned to Pasadena in 2010, presiding over Probate and Family/Civil harassment cases. In 2016, she returned to a downtown Probate Department for two years before retiring in 2018.

Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge House was an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Los Angeles. Initially, she was a criminal prosecutor, but transferred to the civil branch to defend lawsuits against the City and its employees. Her last five years included advising the Los Angeles City Council, Police Commission and Fire Commission. She successfully defended the City's Police and Fire departments in high-dollar-value and high-profile cases in both federal and state courts.

Organizations & Achievements

- ***Recipient:*** Los Angeles County 2004 Woman of the Year; Pasadena Bar Association's 2004 Judge of the Year; California Judges Association's 2008 Bernard F. Jefferson Award for Excellence in Judicial Education; California Judges Association 2010 Vice President; San Fernando Valley Bar Association's 2011 Excellence in Judicial Administration award; Dean, B.E. Witkin Judicial College, 2011-2012; San Fernando Valley Bar Association's 2014 Judge of the Year; Civil Law Instructor for Chinese Judges selected by Yale Law School's China Law Center in conjunction with the U.S. State Department, Beijing, 2007
- ***Former Member:*** Judicial Council's Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee 1998-2004; Vice-Chair, California Judicial Education and Research (CJER) 2010-2017; California Judicial Council Workgroup Chair for Civil 3-Track Protocol and Development/Implementation of California's Expedited Jury Trial Legislation 2010-2016; Judicial Council KLEPS Award Committee 2004 -2013
- ***Current Activities:*** Adjunct Professor, University of Southern California's Gould School of Law, 2014 to Present; Los Angeles County Bar Association, *Los Angeles Lawyer*, Editorial Board 2018

Education & Training

- J.D., University of San Diego School of Law (1978)
- B.A., University of California at Los Angeles (1975)

Judge House is available throughout California.

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