

A STANDARD WORTHY OF THE STAKES *FOR PERSONAL INJURY RESOLUTION*

COMPLEXITY DEMANDS *CALIBER*

Personal injury cases carry real weight — for counsel, for clients, and for the outcomes that years of work have built toward. They turn on questions with no easy answers: how liability is apportioned when the facts cut both ways, how damages are valued when an injury will shape a lifetime, how carriers set reserves and where authority sits in the room. These cases turn on human complexity as much as legal complexity. The choice of neutral shapes all of it.

The neutrals on our panel have built their careers inside these cases — as trial lawyers, as judges, as mediators who do this work every day. They know which experts persuade juries and which fall apart on cross. They have tried the cases, weighed the risks, and read the rooms. They understand what counsel need to move a matter forward and what clients need to feel heard — and they stay with every dispute until the resolution is one all sides can stand behind.

Learn More About *Our Panel of Neutrals*

The right neutral can shape the outcome of a personal injury case. Scan to view full biographies, practice areas, and availability for every neutral on the Signature Resolution panel.

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Our Newest Panelists:
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THOMAS OESTERREICH

| MEDIATOR |

Tom approaches personal injury mediation with the perspective of someone who has handled disputes from virtually every seat at the table. He has participated in approximately 4,000 mediations and arbitrations as an advocate and neutral, with substantial experience in personal injury, wrongful death, premises liability, transportation, and other tort matters. After representing both plaintiffs and defendants throughout his litigation career, Tom became a full-time neutral in 2021. His active mediation style combines detailed case preparation, candid risk assessment, and persistent engagement to keep negotiations moving when parties are far apart.

ROBERT M. TESSIER

| MEDIATOR |

With more than 5,000 litigated disputes guided to resolution since 1994, Bob has built one of the most established personal injury mediation practices in California. His work includes catastrophic injury and complex tort matters involving traumatic brain and orthopedic injuries, as well as the medical liens, insurance coverage issues, and damages questions that often accompany them. Bob's earlier experience representing both injured plaintiffs and defendants gives him a practical understanding of how each side evaluates a claim and informs his persistent, hands-on approach to reaching settlement.

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HON. TIMOTHY M. CASSERLY (RET.)

| MEDIATOR |

Personal injury and wrongful death matters have been a significant part of Judge Casserly's work both on the bench and as a full-time mediator. During 25 years on the San Diego County bench, he presided over civil trials and conducted more than 300 judicial settlement conferences, giving him substantial experience evaluating liability, damages, and litigation risk. Since 2021, Judge Casserly has devoted his practice exclusively to mediation, where his patient but candid style is particularly effective in emotionally charged cases and matters where the parties remain far apart on value.



HON. CAROL OVERTON (RET.)

| MEDIATOR | ARBITRATOR |

From trying civil cases to conducting judicial settlement conferences, Judge Overton has spent much of her career evaluating the issues that drive personal injury and tort litigation. During more than 16 years in the Santa Clara County Superior Court's Civil Division, she presided over matters involving personal injury, wrongful death, medical malpractice, and other tort claims and also served in a dedicated settlement judge assignment. Now a full-time mediator and arbitrator, Judge Overton brings an evaluative and pragmatic perspective to settlement, working with counsel and parties to assess risk, address obstacles, and identify practical paths to resolution.

SCOTT H. CARR

For more than three decades, Scott tried catastrophic personal injury and wrongful death cases for plaintiffs, and won. A partner at Greene Broillet & Wheeler from 1989 to 2023, one of California's most respected plaintiffs' firms, he negotiated and litigated more than $150 million in personal injury results alone: fatal automobile collisions, airport and ski-accident catastrophes, and defective-product cases that left families changed forever.

That record earns him the room. Named Consumer Attorney of the Year, ranked among the Lawdragon 500 Leading Plaintiff Lawyers and California's Top 100 Civil Plaintiff Trial Lawyers, and honored by Best Lawyers in personal injury year after year, Scott has carried injury cases at the very top of the value spectrum, so his read on a number is one neither side can easily wave away. What parties remember, though, is his empathy in the face of devastating loss. He treats every case as a problem to be solved, pressing counsel to test the true strengths and weaknesses of a matter rather than nudging them toward a figure.

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Pre-mediation discovery: Get key cards on the table

with Scott Hengesbach



In complex medical cases, the more critical expert evidence parties can surface before mediation, the greater the chance of turning uncertainty into meaningful settlement leverage.

Most garden-variety personal injury cases can safely proceed to mediation following routine written discovery and a handful of non-expert depositions. Such mediations are commonly scheduled three to six months before trial, enough time for the parties to try and settle the case before they must engage in costly, time-consuming expert discovery and other pretrial work.

But when a case involves novel and/or complex medical issues, such routine non-expert discovery will not typically unearth key facts needed for maximally productive mediation. Alas, many of the most critical facts reside in the minds of medical and scientific experts.

For this reason, counsel handling these types of cases should consider ways to bring critical facts to light prior to mediation without having to engage in comprehensive expert discovery. The more key cards that are lying face-up on the table at mediation, the more likely a case is to settle.

Here are some creative ways parties can unearth and illuminate critical facts prior to mediation without investing in full-scale expert discovery.

A construct for expert discovery

Like most human beings, lawyers tend to be creatures of habit. In the civil litigation arena, they may be strongly inclined to rigidly adhere to the order of operation and timing of discovery as laid out in the Code of Civil Procedure. Even in mass tort litigation, where detailed case management orders altering statutory deadlines are often the order of the day, deviations tend to be broad, such as elongating the deadlines for all expert designations, counter designations and depositions.

While most cases involving novel and/or complex medical issues do not require comprehensive case management orders, it can be useful to devise a limited case management plan that deviates from the requirements of the code. Such a plan can pave the way for disclosure of key facts that better enable the parties to negotiate a settlement.

Pre-mediation disclosure

A simple way to facilitate pre-mediation disclosure of key medical and scientific facts, as well as opinions, is to designate and depose a select few experts well before the CCP deadlines. Imagine, for example, parties in a case involving hotly disputed medical causation. They recognize that causation is the linchpin of the case, but they want to get to mediation without going through the time and expense of comprehensive expert discovery. In such a case, counsel can agree to conduct early depositions of a predetermined number of experts in certain fields before mediation, deferring the balance of expert discovery until after mediation.

In theory, this could involve just two competing expert depositions before mediation. Although the process would involve some time and expense, truncating the expert discovery in this way would greatly help the parties understand the strengths and weaknesses of their case on a pivotal issue without tremendously increasing their pre-mediation costs.

A more limited way to facilitate pre-mediation disclosure of key medical and scientific facts and opinions before mediation might be for the parties to simply agree to exchange reports by a few select experts without conducting depositions of the experts. This would be akin to slotting mediation in between the disclosure of expert reports and expert depositions, albeit in a piecemeal fashion. It is a more surgical approach that can offer much of the benefit of completing select expert depositions without the time and expense of depositions.

Even if parties are reluctant to share expert reports in advance of mediation, they can agree to share those reports confidentially with the mediator. This would not reduce the cost of having the experts prepare reports, but if both parties produce reports that reasonably detail the experts' opinions and the bases for their opinions, the reports will provide the mediator valuable information about the strengths and weaknesses of both sides' case, enabling him or her to discuss those strengths and weaknesses with each side to the extent permitted by the other side.

Such an approach should serve the parties far better than when an attorney simply shows up to mediation and advises the mediator in private that the attorney has retained an expert to address X issue and he or she is prepared to testify that such-and-such is true or false.

The benefits, in practice

The merit of these approaches becomes apparent when we consider a dispute involving the nature and extent of a plaintiff's injuries, and by extension, the nature and extent of his or her future care needs. When attorneys represent parties who have suffered serious residual injuries, they almost always

need to retain a life care planner who can detail the plaintiff's future care needs and the costs thereof.

Deposing competing life care planners prior to mediation will probably not be especially valuable, but it can be of great benefit if the plaintiff is able to produce a detailed life care plan prior to mediation. Such a plan should be based on meaningful interaction between the life care planner and the plaintiff's treating physicians and/or retained medical experts. When it contains this level of information, the plan can make it much easier for the parties to hash out their positions during mediation, as opposed to a truncated life care plan based merely on the life care planner's review of the plaintiff's medical records.

Deposing treating physicians

Deposing treating physicians may not be particularly revelatory; the physicians often merely reiterate the plaintiff's subjective complaints and the medical examination findings, diagnoses, and treatment plan. However, when cases involve novel or complex medical issues, treating physicians may end up wading into a few controversial issues, such as medical causation. In such instances, both sides should seriously consider the pros and cons of deposing the treating physician in advance of mediation.

In one memorable case, hepatologists at a highly respected university research hospital treated a liver transplant patient. The plaintiff's medical records revealed de facto causation opinions of the treating physicians: They believed that consumption of the defendant's product caused the plaintiff's liver to fail. Without much scientific evidence available in the medical literature, defense counsel chose to depose the treating physicians to learn the basis for their opinions. Those depositions yielded critical information with a significant bearing on settlement of the case.

In another case, a defendant driver admittedly caused an auto accident that injured the plaintiff, whose injuries were greatly exacerbated by the conduct of a health care provider. Both sides saw the wisdom of deposing the treating physicians to understand the potential negligence of the original health care provider and to get a better read on the nature and extent of the plaintiff's ultimate injuries and damages. Those depositions ultimately supported an eight-figure settlement of the case at mediation.

Pre-mediation motions

Cases involving highly debatable scientific issues such as medical causation often lend themselves to judicial intervention via motions for summary judgment, summary adjudication, or in limine. While attorneys often wish to forego the considerable time and expense of preparing such motions prior to mediation, filing them early almost invariably increases the probability of success at mediation. When a party merely mentions an intent to file a dispositive motion at mediation, there is little chance that the needle will move; if the motion has already been filed, the dynamic shifts significantly. This is especially true in complex medical cases where the scientific issues can be esoteric.

Consider a case involving a plaintiff who underwent a knee replacement procedure following an auto accident. Both sides realized that the pivotal issue in the case was whether the implant in question caused the plaintiff to contract a serious autoimmune disease. They agreed to make an unusual joint request to the court for a hearing on a motion in limine to exclude evidence that the implant caused the autoimmune disease. Because the parties made it clear that they would go to mediation before the motion was to be heard, the court granted their request and set a briefing schedule and hearing date for the motion several months prior to trial. After the parties took a few agreed upon expert depositions, they filed their briefs on the motion. They then proceeded to mediation and were able to resolve the matter — largely because their motion papers enlightened both sides about the strengths and weaknesses of their evidence on the pivotal issue in the case.

Conclusion

When complex medical or scientific issues are central to a case, counsel should consider devising and using strategies that will flesh out key evidence in advance of mediation. This may require a little forethought, but the payoff could be significant.

Although many strategies work within the construct of the Code of Civil Procedure, others may fall outside the statutory box. Either way, getting out in front of critical issues in these cases, whether by conducting discovery or by motion practice, helps lay key cards on the table, increasing the chances of successful mediation.

Originally published in the Daily Journal



HON. WENDY L. WILCOX (RET.)

Some mediators spend their careers evaluating cases. Judge Wilcox spent hers building them, trying them, and leading them. Before joining the Los Angeles Superior Court, she founded and grew one of California's largest women-owned litigation firms while handling catastrophic injury, wrongful death, products liability, insurance, toxic tort, and public entity cases. From multi-million-dollar settlements to complex jury trials, she built a reputation for preparation, strategic thinking, and knowing how to move difficult cases toward resolution.

That entrepreneurial and trial-tested mindset carries into every mediation. Judge Wilcox approaches each case with the urgency of someone who understands the costs of prolonged litigation and the realities facing both plaintiffs and defendants. Combining firsthand courtroom experience with years on the bench resolving high-exposure civil matters, she delivers candid evaluations, creative settlement strategies, and a tireless commitment to finding common ground—even when negotiations appear far apart.

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HON. PETER D. LICHTMAN (RET.)



Judge Lichtman is the neutral parties turn to when an injury case is too big or too complicated for an easy answer. Over a more than 40-year legal and judicial career, he led the Los Angeles County Superior Court's Mandatory Settlement Program and helped found its Complex Civil Litigation program, twice serving as its supervising judge. His practice centers on catastrophic personal injury and complex, multi-party matters—construction defect, insurance, environmental, securities, real estate, and employment—and his track record includes some of the nation's largest damages cases, among them the 2008 Metrolink train collision and major clergy abuse litigation. What sets him apart is a settlement instinct honed over nearly two decades on the bench, where he was resolving cases from the start. Parties on every side commend him for a balanced approach and an ability to untangle even the most complex disputes, identifying the leverage points and guiding everyone toward a realistic, durable resolution.

HON. BENNY OSORIO (RET.)



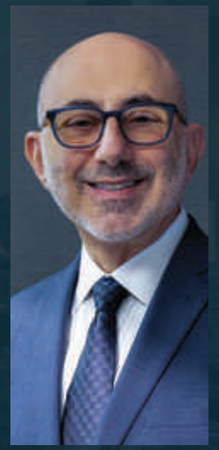
Judge Osorio pairs a decade on the Los Angeles Superior Court with an instinct for temperament and a quick, disarming wit that takes the temperature down in a tense room. On the bench he resolved hundreds of civil matters and ran countless settlement conferences across the Chatsworth, Stanley Mosk, and Burbank courthouses, developing a sharp sense of how a case is likely to be valued and where it can move. Before his judicial career, he ran a practice handling personal injury and employment matters, giving him a feel for these disputes from the advocate's side as well. As a neutral, Judge Osorio brings patience, candor, and a genuine ability to connect with the people in front of him—and as a fluent Spanish speaker, he's a natural fit for parties who want to be heard in their own language. A Lecturer in Law at USC Gould, he combines real courtroom authority with the lighter touch that often makes the difference in getting a case done.

DAVID SAMUELS

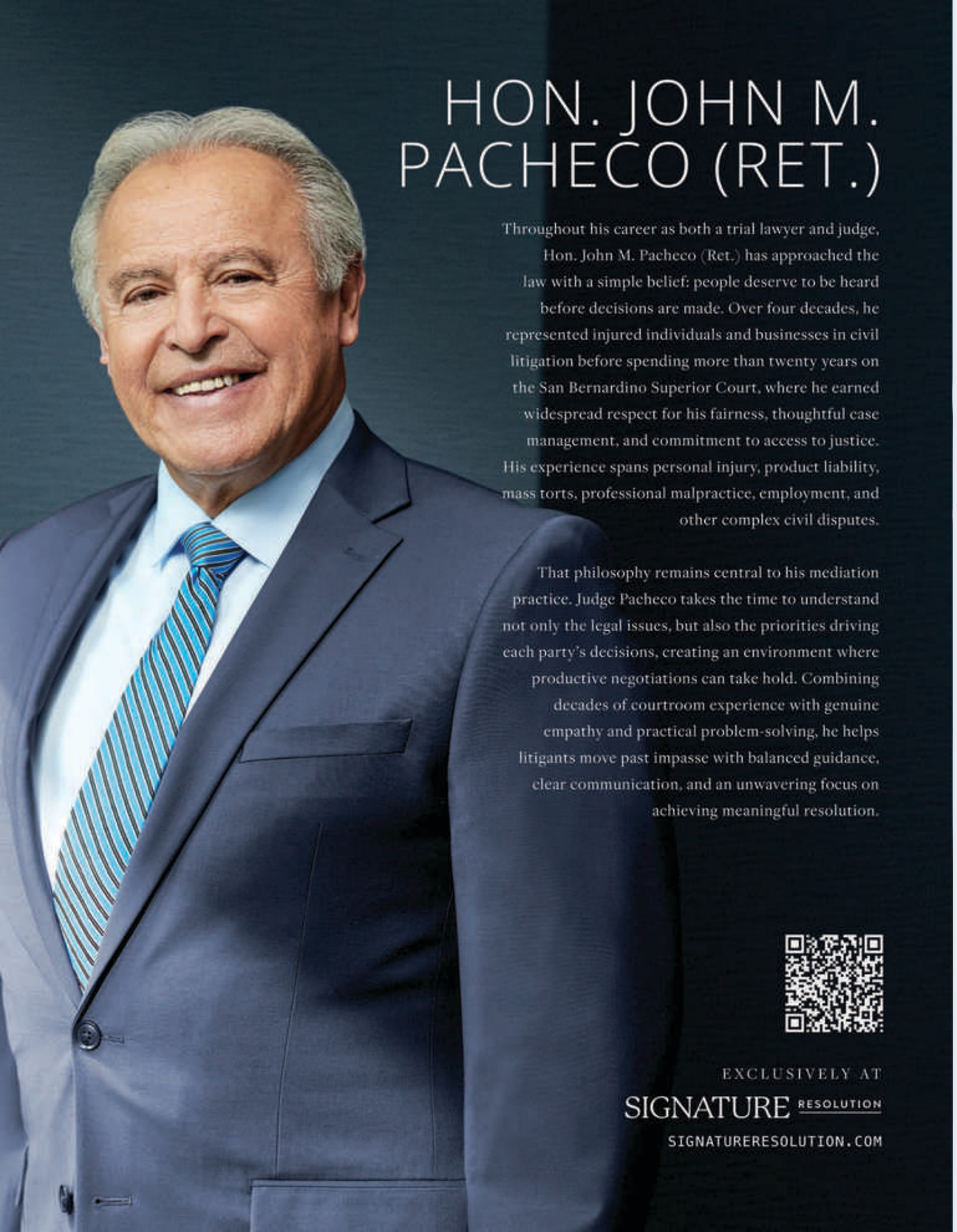


David has spent his career in the world of personal injury, and it shows in the room. Across nearly 35 years of litigation and mediation, he has resolved thousands of injury matters, including high-exposure cases spanning construction, hospitality, commercial auto and property, ridesharing, trucking, and dangerous conditions of public property. That depth gives him an immediate, practical command of how these cases are built and valued—and where the real risk lies for everyone involved. Samuels approaches mediation as a genuine opportunity: a safe environment where parties can explore the facts and the strengths and weaknesses of their dispute, then take control of the outcome themselves. Before becoming a neutral, he was vice-chair of a national hospitality practice and a key member of a complex business and commercial litigation team, experience that rounds out his command of high-stakes, multi-party matters. Direct, prepared, and steady under pressure, he helps parties cut through impasse and reach resolutions they've shaped on their own terms.

HON. ZAVEN V. SINANIAN (RET.)



Judge Sinanian brings something almost no neutral can match: the sheer volume of his settlement experience. From 2012 through 2023, assigned to the Los Angeles Superior Court's Mandatory Settlement Conference Program and ultimately serving as its managing judge, he mediated roughly two cases a day—several thousand in all—across virtually every area of civil law, including catastrophic injury, products liability, mass torts, and complex multi-party litigation. That daily, high-volume work, rather than any theory, shaped his approach: he knows what cases are worth, what parties will actually accept, and how to move people through impasse under real-world constraints. Attorneys describe his style as "gentle strength"—quiet and approachable, yet firm enough to guide parties toward honest assessments of risk. Judge Sinanian leads with active listening and human connection, creating a structured but warm setting where parties feel heard while being steered to confront the practical realities of their positions. He balances patience with forward momentum, lowering tension and keeping the focus on solutions.



Déjà Vu: Lawyer's Mistakes Might Mean Retrying the Same PI Case *with Daniel Kohls*



Legal malpractice claims arising from personal injury cases generally require plaintiffs to prove, through a "trial-within-a-trial," that the attorney's negligence caused actual harm and that the underlying case would have produced a better outcome absent the attorney's error.

What could be worse than going through a lengthy, complicated personal injury trial? How about going through it a second time?

That can happen if a disappointing PI verdict is attributed to attorney malpractice. The attorney might have neglected to file required motions, missed the deadline for submitting important documents or waited so long to file the complaint that the statute of limitations ran. The plaintiff asserts that, but for those mistakes, the verdict would have been far more favorable to him or her.

Those are all serious errors, but not necessarily an open-and-shut malpractice case for the plaintiff. Even when an attorney's mistake is the clear reason for the loss, plaintiffs are often left uncompensated by their errant lawyers. How is that possible?

The law tells us that malpractice requires actual proof, and the only way to establish that proof is to try the personal injury case all over again. If the underlying case was a dud, the malpractice claim will likewise be a dud.

Professional malpractice 101

A second trial may be a huge headache, but it's the only way to validate the plaintiff's assertions. The whole point of the new trial is to establish or disprove the plaintiff's claim that he or she is entitled to damages because of what the attorney did or failed to do the first time around.

California law establishes four elements that must be proven in every legal malpractice case:

Duty: The attorney owed a legal duty based on an attorney-client relationship;

Breach: The attorney breached that duty by an act or omission that fell below the applicable standard of care;

Causation: The breach directly caused a negative outcome in the case or transaction;

Damages: The client suffered actual harm as a result of the attorney's acts or omissions.

Injury

Before malpractice damages can be awarded, there must have been an injury entitling the plaintiff to those damages. The mere fact that the attorney didn't handle matters correctly will not by itself be enough to state a malpractice claim. California Code of Civil Procedure Section 340.6(a)(1) provides that even when a client discovers facts to support a claim of negligence against the attorney, the statute will be tolled until the client can prove that he or she has sustained "actual injury."

In Budd v. Nixen (1971) 6 Cal.3d 195, the California Supreme Court held that "actual injury" occurs when "the client suffers appreciable harm as a consequence of his attorney's negligence." (Id. at 200-01.)

"The mere breach of a professional duty, causing only nominal damages, speculative harm, or the threat of future harm — not yet realized — does not suffice to create a cause of action for negligence," and does not rise to the level of actual injury. (Ibid.)

Actual injury is generally a question of fact, but if the material facts are undisputed, the court may decide when actual injury occurred as a matter of law. (Adams v. Paul (1995) 11 Cal.4th 583, 585-86.)

Causation

There must also be causation — a link between the attorney's acts and the harm suffered by the client. California Civil Jury Instructions (CACI) Series 600 outlines the burden of proof in legal malpractice actions, and CACI No. 601 establishes the requirements for proving causation:

"To recover damages from [name of defendant], [name of plaintiff] must prove that [he/she/nonbinary pronoun/it] would have obtained a better result if [name of defendant] had acted as a reasonably careful attorney. [Name of plaintiff] was not harmed by [name of defendant]'s conduct if the same harm would have occurred anyway without that conduct."

In other words, the plaintiff must show that but for the attorney's negligent acts or omissions, he or she should have obtained a more favorable result. (Viner v. Sweet (2003) 30 Cal.4th 1232, 1244 [135 Cal.Rptr.2d 629, 70 P.3d 1046].)

"If the allegedly negligent conduct does not cause damage, it generates no cause of action in tort. The mere breach of a professional duty, causing only nominal damages, speculative harm, or the threat of future harm — not yet realized — does not suffice to create a cause of action for negligence." (Jordache Enterprises, Inc. v. Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison (1998) 18 Cal.4th 739, 749-750

[76 Cal.Rptr.2d 749, 958 P.2d 1062].)

Trial-within-a-trial

Quite simply, professional malpractice claims must be tested against this question: "If the attorney had not erred, should the client have obtained a better result?" This is commonly referred to as the "case-within-a-case" or the "trial-within-a-trial"; the same methodology and causation standards will apply not only to personal injury claims, but also to transactional and other types of disputes. (See Loube v. Loube (1998) 64 Cal.App.4th 421, 426 ["The question is not what might or even what would have happened absent the alleged malpractice, but what should have happened."], italics in original.)

"[The trial-within-a-trial method] is the most effective safeguard yet devised against speculative and conjectural claims in this era of ever expanding litigation. It is a standard of proof designed to limit damages to those actually caused by a professional's malfeasance." (Mattco Forge, Inc. v. Arthur Young & Co. (1997) 52 Cal. App.4th 820, 834 [60 Cal.Rptr.2d 780].)

For legal malpractice experts, the mantra is simple: "The malpractice case will never be worth more than the underlying case was worth." As long as the malpractice claims are limited to professional negligence, this is absolutely accurate. Cases alleging other causes of action, such as breach of fiduciary duty or intentional misconduct, could expose counsel to additional potential liability.

A personal injury case worth $50,000 is still only worth $50,000 against the errant attorney. It doesn't get better just because the lawsuit is now against a lawyer. The original case must be re-litigated to determine its merits, but if it turns out to have little or no value, there will be little or no recovery on the malpractice claim.

The botched PI case

Imagine a straightforward two-car collision with disputed liability. The alleged mistake by the former lawyer may have been obvious (failing to file the case on time, resulting in a successful statute of limitations defense), or it might have been more complicated (not calling a particular eyewitness to the accident, or not introducing a potential piece of outcome-determinative evidence). The nature of the purported error will typically not alter the fundamental question: Should there have been a different outcome?

The former lawyer lost the case; the plaintiff must now sue that lawyer to get any recovery. It should be a simple matter of suing the attorney and using an expert to testify about damages attributable to the attorney's error, correct? Alas, it isn't that simple.

The principle of "no harm, no foul" applies in this situation. If the lawyer had done everything in accordance with the applicable standard of care but the jury still would have ruled for the defense, professional negligence didn't cause harm to the plaintiff. He or she would have lost the case regardless. Suppose the plaintiff alleges that his or her lawyer's mistake caused the verdict to be lower than it should have been. If the second jury finds that he or she should get that same amount — or less — the plaintiff wasn't harmed by the attorney's error.

But even if the underlying case is proven to have a value that was "lost" because of the attorney's error, the plaintiff might nevertheless be left holding the bag. He still has the burden of proving that, more likely than not, he would have collected the judgment from the original defendant. "Collectibility" can be as simple as showing that the underlying defendant had an insurance policy worth "x" or had assets worth "y," but without such proof the professional malpractice case is doomed even if all other proof is present.

Bifurcation

Courts require that causation in these types of cases be proven through the "trial-within-a-trial" methodology. The professional negligence allegations are typically bifurcated, with the underlying PI case tried first, and the lawyers representing the allegedly negligent attorney standing in the shoes of the underlying defendant. Those lawyers will now be advancing arguments directly opposite the arguments that would or should have been made by their client in the original case.

Case law, however, does not clearly mandate bifurcation in these circumstances. In many instances and for a variety of reasons, including judicial efficiency, courts will allow plaintiffs to try both the professional negligence case and the underlying case simultaneously. Defense counsel might argue that injecting negligence claims into the proceeding will result in an automatic bias against their client, with the jury confused about which evidence applies to which case, but no case law or statute requires the court to sever claims for purposes of trial.

Retrying the PI case

Whether tried at the same time or not, the personal injury case still has to be "valued," and the only way for this to happen, absent stipulation, is for the original case to be tried — or re-tried — in front of a new jury. The second jury will now make a second decision about the value of the case.

The same witnesses who would have testified at the first trial must be called to testify at the "trial-within-a-trial": police officers, eyewitnesses, treating physicians, causation experts, and damages experts. The attorneys representing plaintiffs in malpractice cases must therefore be competent to try personal injury cases or they must retain counsel with PI experience to handle that aspect of the claim.

Nothing about the "trial-within-a-trial" should be any different than what would have transpired but for the alleged error or omission of the former attorney. Counsel must have particularized knowledge of the principles involved in the underlying case — duty, breach, causation, comparative fault and damages.

Retrial out of court

Plaintiffs cannot ordinarily short-circuit the difficult process of putting on the underlying case in its entirety, whether or not bifurcation is permitted. This makes such cases complex on at least two levels, heightening the challenges of trying them in a courtroom.

For this reason, professional malpractice cases involving personal injury claims are often ideal candidates for alternative dispute resolution with a qualified neutral. The mediator or Settlement Conference Judge chosen to oversee the process should have the requisite experience to identify and explore the strengths and weaknesses of both the underlying claim and the professional negligence claim.

Conclusion

Attorney malpractice in PI cases can be a real and serious matter, but it isn't a lottery ticket that automatically pays big rewards. The underlying case must have merit, the plaintiff must be able to establish harm, and there must be proof tying that harm to the attorney's errors. If he or she can't do this, the malpractice claim will have no merit.

As painful as it seems, the best and only way to prove a compensable malpractice claim is to relive the original trial all over again. But that pain can be considerably lowered by experiencing deja vu out of court, such as through mediation.

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HON. DANIEL J. BUCKLEY (RET.)



Few neutrals have shaped California's civil justice system from as many vantage points as Judge Buckley. A former trial lawyer, Complex Civil judge, and Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court, he has spent decades handling the kinds of high-exposure disputes where legal complexity, institutional dynamics, and litigation risk intersect. From catastrophic injury and toxic torts to mass torts and other complex civil matters, Judge Buckley developed a reputation for thoughtful case management, practical judgment, and earning the confidence of lawyers on both sides.

That perspective defines his work as a mediator. Judge Buckley combines the patience to let parties feel fully heard with the credibility to deliver candid evaluations when negotiations reach an impasse. Having overseen landmark litigation and some of California's most consequential civil cases, he knows how to focus attention on the issues that matter most, helping litigants move beyond entrenched positions toward durable resolutions.

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HON. HALIM DHANIDINA (RET.)

Hon. Halim Dhanidina (Ret.) brings more than 25 years of legal experience to the personal injury matters he now mediates, including service as a trial judge and as a justice on California's Second District Court of Appeal. From the appellate bench he reviewed close to 1,000 appeals across a wide range of disciplines, with a substantial body of tort and personal injury decisions among them—giving him an uncommon feel for how liability findings and damages awards hold up under scrutiny, and where a verdict is most vulnerable on review. Justice Dhanidina approaches mediation as a listener first, attentive to what each side actually needs and focused on understanding the motivations behind a position before working to bridge it. A career marked by firsts as California's first Muslim Superior Court judge and the first Muslim Court of Appeal justice in the country, he favors an engaged style that leaves parties feeling heard, understood, and confident in a fair resolution.



HON. ERICK L. LARSH (RET.)

Hon. Erick L. Larsh (Ret.) brings nearly two decades on the Orange County Superior Court bench to the personal injury disputes he now helps resolve. Across a long civil docket, he presided over personal injury claims, insurance bad faith matters, and professional liability cases, giving him a grounded sense of how these disputes are tried, how damages are weighed, and what moves a case toward resolution—work that earned him Judge of the Year honors from the Orange County Trial Lawyers in 2024. Judge Larsh mediates the way he ran his courtroom: thoroughly prepared, precise in his questions, and candid in assessing the strengths and exposures on each side, yet measured enough that hard conversations about risk never escalate. He identifies the legal pressure points, weighs the practical and financial realities behind every decision, and helps parties see a dispute through more than one lens, guiding them toward agreements they can actually live with.

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DOUG GLASS



Doug has been a full-time mediator since 2001, and in that time parties and counsel have selected him on well over 5,000 cases—an extraordinary track record that includes a steady stream of personal injury disputes. Before turning to mediation, he spent years as a civil trial attorney with a focus on personal injury, real estate, and construction defect litigation, trying more than 100 cases and earning an Outstanding Trial Lawyer Award from the Consumer Attorneys of San Diego. That courtroom foundation shows up in the room: Glass pairs thorough preparation and straightforward talk with a rare willingness to be candid and even vulnerable, which disrupts the usual back-and-forth and gets parties analyzing their cases honestly. Rather than dictate terms, he inspires parties to shape outcomes that actually fit their dispute. The recognition has followed—Best Lawyers' 2017 Lawyer of the Year for Mediation in San Diego and a Daily Journal Top 50 Neutrals nod among them—but what sticks with counsel is his humanism, and a knack for turning hard cases into resolutions everyone can accept.

HON. KERI KATZ (RET.)



What sets Judge Katz apart is persistence—the patience to keep clarifying a complex matter until a practical path to resolution comes into view. Over nearly 40 years as a civil litigator and a Superior Court civil independent calendar judge, she presided over and tried personal injury, wrongful death, and premises liability cases, alongside construction, professional liability, and property disputes, building a broad command of the issues that drive injury litigation. Judge Katz is known for developing personalized, workable solutions rather than one-size-fits-all settlements, and for creating an environment in which every party feels heard. Her dedication doesn't end when a deal is reached: she takes particular care that settlements are not just agreed to but effectively implemented. A longtime adjunct professor who taught the practical application of civil law and trained hundreds of attorneys, she brings the same clarity and rigor to mediation. With patience, empathy, and a thorough examination of every settlement option, Judge Katz helps parties move past entrenched positions toward common ground they can stand behind.

RHONDA MALLORY



Rhonda likes to say that every case has a story, and her job is to listen for it. Across more than three decades in both private practice and public service, she has handled the full range of personal injury and general liability matters—premises liability, automobile negligence, dangerous-condition and public entity claims, and civil rights cases among them—giving her a grounded feel for how an injury dispute takes shape and what it will take to resolve. She began her career in medical malpractice litigation and went on to lead trial teams and supervise complex tort and condemnation matters, experience that sharpened both her command of the law and her instinct for people. As a mediator, Mallory leads with adaptability and empathy, attentive to the emotional weight many parties carry into the process and committed to helping them avoid the prolonged strain of litigation. Honored in 2022 with the Hughes-McClenahan Civility Award for professionalism, she brings that same respect to the table, listening carefully, working through each case's nuances, and guiding parties toward solutions they can genuinely live with.

HON. KENNETH MEDEL (RET.)



Judge Medel brings something many neutrals can't: nearly 14 years on the San Diego County Superior Court bench paired with 23 years as a civil trial attorney, so he has evaluated personal injury cases from both the counsel table and the bench. In private practice he built a respected civil litigation firm centered on medical negligence, and over the years handled automobile and motorcycle accident matters, giving him a practical command of how injury claims are valued and tried. That dual vantage anchors his mediation style, which blends facilitative and authoritative approaches depending on what a case needs—patient listening when parties need to feel heard, candid input when they need a realistic read. Judge Medel believes resolution comes from three things: thorough preparation, genuine human understanding, and a clear, deliberate plan for reaching agreement. He approaches every dispute with respect for the positions on each side and equal care for the people behind them, and he is known for a measured, reasonable temperament that helps even difficult, emotionally charged cases reach a fair and timely outcome.

Daily Journal Profile: Retired Judge Eddie Sturgeon Emphasizes Preparation, Listening in Mediation Practice



During his more than three decades on the bench in San Diego County, retired judge Eddie C. Sturgeon was often grateful for private neutrals.

"Most judges — especially in San Diego — we were carrying very, very heavy caseloads," Sturgeon said. "So, any time a neutral — be it a mediator or arbitrator — settled one of my cases, I always thought, 'Thank you very, very much. That's one less.'"

When Sturgeon stepped down from the San Diego County Superior Court in February 2024, he decided he'd like to return the favor.

"I was so very appreciative of neutrals that would get cases resolved," he recalled. "And I thought, 'When I retire, that's what I'm going to do — go help the bench and my brothers and sisters.'"

Sturgeon joined the Signature Resolution roster of private neutrals later that spring, and he has since worked to resolve a variety of commercial, employment and personal injury disputes as a mediator, arbitrator and discovery referee.

The retired judge noted that while he's signed on to roughly 10 cases as an arbitrator, only one of those made it all the way to the hearing phase.

"Most of those don't go," he said. "Ninety percent of arbitration cases settle."

Sturgeon added that it's not uncommon for him to end up ruling on motions for summary judgment as an arbitrator, and often, key rulings of this nature can help move the parties toward settlement. If a dispute does, however, make it to an arbitration hearing, the retired judge makes sure both sides have ample time to present their entire case.

"That's really important to me," Sturgeon said. "I want everybody to be heard."

Listening is also critical during mediations, according to Sturgeon, who said preparation beforehand with briefs provided by counsel helps him craft a list of around 10 to 12 questions he wants to cover with the parties during the session.

Sturgeon said he's especially thoughtful about how he approaches parties.

"You have to be very in tune with them," Sturgeon explained. "They come from different backgrounds. They come from different nationalities. And that's all a big consideration when you go into these mediations."

San Diego litigator Eric J. Beste appeared before Sturgeon when he was on the bench and has since used the neutral to resolve a complex commercial case. Beste said he really appreciated all the effort Sturgeon put into building rapport with his clients.

"If you have a case where it's really important to know how the client individually viewed the dispute and to understand their story, where they come from, what was going on for them before the dispute, he will definitely take the time and do that," Beste said. "I think he's very effective at getting that information from the clients."

Beste added that Sturgeon's extensive pre-mediation preparation, which included meeting individually over Zoom beforehand with counsel for both sides, really helped to establish that rapport early.

"On the day of mediation, there was no introductory 'What's this case about?' Or 'Who are you?' We were off to the races right away," Beste recalled. "And I thought that was very helpful and efficient because it took all day, but we got it done."

San Diego defense attorney Timothy S. Noon also appeared before Sturgeon when he was on the bench and used him recently to successfully mediate a personal injury dispute. Noon agreed that the retired judge's extensive preparation was particularly helpful.

"He brings the same enthusiasm and energy as he did on the bench to mediation," Noon said. "And reading the briefs, knowing the evidence beforehand really allowed him to cut to those key, probing questions early, which really makes him effective."

Like Beste, Noon also agreed that the retired judge applied a particularly productive approach with the parties.

"He's a very good-natured individual, but he tempers that with an effective firmness," Noon explained. "He really has the relatability to all walks of life because he was on the bench so long, … and he knows when to be firm and when not to."

A 1973 Santa Clara School of Law graduate, Sturgeon tackled civil and criminal defense litigation for 14 years as an attorney before Gov. George Deukmejian appointed him to the El Cajon Municipal Court in 1988.

Noting that he's not forgotten what it's like to represent clients, the retired judge did say mediation is typically most effective when lawyers show up with a willingness to negotiate.

"When they don't want to negotiate, that's a problem," Sturgeon said. "Sometimes, they'll take a real hard-line position at the very beginning of the mediation, and that really doesn't help."

Beste said Sturgeon isn't afraid to weigh in on a case's strengths and weaknesses during mediation, but he noted the retired judge makes it clear he's not issuing any rulings.

"He does so in a way that is sufficiently deferential to whoever is the adjudicative body," Beste said. "But it's more like, 'This is how I see it,' and then helping to get the client — and the lawyers — to understand the risks and the rewards."

San Diego litigator Peter J. Schulz appeared before Sturgeon when he was on the bench and has since used him to resolve five different construction and personal injury cases. Schulz said Sturgeon sits at the top of his list of mediators for just about any case.

"He really understands the realities of what happens in a courtroom if the case goes to trial," Schulz said. "He's fair. … And clients will like him. They'll respect him. And attorneys respect him. I've been doing this 32 years, and I don't know a single lawyer in town that doesn't respect him."

Noon added, meanwhile, that Sturgeon doesn't apply a rigid approach to mediation.

"We were on the brink of a breakdown," Noon said. "And he showed the flexibility and adaptability to completely alter course seven hours into a mediation and pursue a different final strategy that ended up resolving the entire case."

Sturgeon said those are successes that he finds particularly fulfilling these days.

"A lot of the time, my courtroom was not a fun place to be because of the severity of the damages," he explained. "These were medical malpractice cases, severe injury cases, accident cases, where people are paralyzed. … So not a fun place. And it's stressful. When you're in trial, it's so stressful for the party. So as long as I can alleviate that and help them avoid a trial, that makes me feel pretty good."

Here are some attorneys who have used Judge Sturgeon's services: Eric J. Beste, Barnes & Thornburg LLP; Timothy S. Noon, Noon & Associates PC; Peter J. Schulz, Schulz Brick & Rogaski APC; Penny T. Ostin, Law Office of Penny Ostin; Kyle R. Maland, Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith LLP

By Shane Nelson
Originally published in the Daily Journal



Signature Resolution
Northern California

HON. JONATHAN E. KARESH (RET.)
| SILICON VALLEY |



Judge Karesh brings warmth and approachability to work that can be anything but, drawing on nearly forty years in the law to help parties resolve personal injury and other civil disputes. He began in private practice handling personal injury, product liability, and construction defect cases—the kinds of matters he'd later see from the bench. Appointed to the San Mateo County Superior Court in 2001, he spent 24 years presiding over a broad civil docket, including personal injury cases and high-stakes conservatorships, managing calendars that ran six to eight cases a day across nearly every area of civil litigation. That experience taught him to find and frame the issues that actually move a case, while addressing the emotions a hard dispute can stir up. As a neutral, Judge Karesh leads with an open mind and an inclusive style, pairing clarity with empathy and a quick sense of humor so every party feels heard.

ARNIE LEVINSON
| SAN FRANCISCO |



Arnie built his reputation as one of the country's leading insurance coverage and bad faith attorneys, and that depth gives him a distinctive edge in mediating personal injury disputes, where coverage and valuation often decide the outcome. Across nearly four decades as an attorney and roughly a decade as a mediator, he has worked the full span of civil matters—personal injury, professional liability, employment, ERISA, and business disputes among them—resolving cases other lawyers had written off as insurmountable. Levinson's approach starts with listening, particularly early, because parties need to know their mediator truly understands their case and how it would be presented to the other side. That credibility, established quickly and without confrontation, moves parties toward settlement decisions they can trust. He pairs a deep command of the law with genuine compassion for the people behind each dispute, sparing them years of painful, expensive litigation.

HON. ROBERT D. MCGUINESS (RET.)
| OAKLAND |



Hon. Robert McGuiness (Ret.) brings five decades in the law and a rare command of courtroom dynamics to the personal injury and civil disputes he now helps resolve. As Supervising Judge of the Alameda County Superior Court's Civil Litigation Settlement Unit, he conducted hundreds of settlement conferences, building a reputation for preparation, clear communication, and the patience to bring even entrenched matters to agreement. Before nearly two decades on the bench, he was a founding partner of an Oakland litigation firm with a wide-ranging civil practice, giving him a practical read on how injury and liability cases are built, valued, and tried. His style is defined by active engagement and respect for each party's perspective, surfacing both the legal and personal dimensions of a conflict while keeping the focus on realistic outcomes. Named Trial Judge of the Year by the Alameda-Contra Costa Trial Lawyers Association in 2012, he pairs analytical rigor with human understanding.

HON. MARK PIERCE (RET.)
| SILICON VALLEY |



For Judge Pierce, personal injury work isn't a sideline—it's where his career began. As a partner at Olson & Pierce, he built a practice centered on personal injury and workers' compensation, then broadened into medical malpractice, liability, business, employment, and real estate matters, completing Harvard's mediation program along the way. Appointed to the Santa Clara County Superior Court in 2005—a process finalized in just six months, reflecting his standing in the legal community—he spent 15 years on the bench refining a philosophy built on patience and thorough listening. That philosophy anchors his mediation practice today. Judge Pierce synthesizes every detail of a case and works to understand and relay the motivations of each side, so an agreement doesn't just get reached but genuinely fits the people reaching it. He brings an elite level of civility and fairness, convinced that trust is earned through comprehensive, empathetic listening.

Signature Resolution *Central California*

8500 STOCKDALE HIGHWAY, SUITE 195
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93311



THOMAS P. FEHER

Thomas is a problem-solver at heart, and after more than 35 years in the courtroom he now channels that instinct into resolving personal injury, medical malpractice, and professional liability disputes as a mediator. His litigation career spanned an unusually wide range of civil matters—personal injury, medical and legal malpractice, employment, class action, and complex litigation among them—and that breadth feeds a mediation style known for being creative, engaged, and tailored to the case in front of him. Believing no two disputes are alike, Feher invests the time to understand every dimension of a matter before mediation begins, so that each party feels genuinely heard and their concerns are met head-on. A member of the American Board of Trial Advocates with an AV rating and Super Lawyer recognition, he pairs serious trial credibility with a warm, solutions-first temperament. Where others see an impasse, Feher looks for the opening—guided, as he likes to put it, by the conviction that where there's a will, there's a way.



HON. DAVID L. LAMPE (RET.)

With over four decades as a civil trial lawyer and then a Kern County Superior Court judge, Judge Lampe presided over hundreds of jury and bench trials in unlimited civil matters, and spent nearly 30 years before that handling complex litigation across tort, premises and product liability, professional negligence, and mass tort. That dual vantage—first arguing these cases, then deciding them—gives him a clear, practical read on how an injury claim is likely to be valued and where each side's real exposure lies. A Bakersfield native with deep Central California roots, Judge Lampe earned a reputation on the bench for fairness, efficiency, and sound judgment, and he carries that same temperament into the mediation room. He is direct without being heavy-handed, focused on moving parties past conflict toward a result they can stand behind. For attorneys in the region, his arrival means high-caliber, trial-tested dispute resolution close to home.

VIVIEN WILLIAMSON

Long before mediation became a standard part of civil litigation, Vivien was helping attorneys and clients resolve their most difficult disputes. Over nearly four decades and thousands of cases, she has devoted her entire career to alternative dispute resolution, building a practice grounded in careful preparation, thoughtful communication, and the belief that informed parties make better decisions. Her experience spans employment, insurance, civil rights, real estate, and complex commercial matters, giving her a sharp read on both the legal issues and the human dynamics that drive settlement.

Rather than relying on pressure or positional bargaining, Vivien treats mediation as a process of education, trust-building, and steady problem-solving. Attorneys value the depth of preparation she brings before a session ever begins; clients value her ability to explain hard issues with clarity, patience, and empathy. As a longtime mediation educator, she taught negotiation and mediation at UC Law San Francisco, designed training for the Bar Association of San Francisco, and founded its ADR Section, bringing a teacher's discipline to every table: do the work up front, and the resolution follows.

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Daily Journal Profile:
Emotional Intelligence *with Nolan Armstrong*



Mediator Nolan S. Armstrong pays particularly close attention to what he described as the emotional temperature in each room while working with litigants to resolve disputes.

"Inherently in mediation, there are going to be frustrations. It's very rarely smooth sailing towards a settlement," Armstrong said. "And especially with parties who haven't experienced mediation before, I try to remind them that it's really important to be patient and to trust the process and not to get too high or low during the day."

If Armstrong does, however, begin to see those intense emotions building, he said he's quick to let the parties know he understands where those feelings are coming from and to connect with them as best as he can on a human level. But he will also try to reiterate that much of the mediation process is about working toward a well-informed decision.

"If you're mad or angry or have other negative emotions that have built up during the course of the day and when it comes time to make that decision, those are clouding your judgment," Armstrong explained, "I don't view that as the optimal outcome."

A 2005 George Washington University Law School graduate, Armstrong worked for two decades at McNamara, Ambacher, Wheeler, Hirsig & Gray LLP, defending clients in personal injury, employment, landlord-tenant, real property, and professional negligence cases. He joined Signature Resolution as a full-time neutral in October 2024.

"I'm just mediating; I'm not arbitrating," Armstrong said. "I felt like my skills were best suited towards focusing exclusively on mediation."

Armstrong added that the chance to help people move beyond the difficulties of their dispute was a key motivator in his decision to refocus his career.

"As attorneys, we're involved in litigation on a day-to-day basis," he explained. "And I think to some extent, you become a little bit desensitized to how emotionally impactful and stressful it is on the individual litigants."

Those emotions and stress are often on full display in the early stages of mediation, according to Armstrong.

"And a lot of times, it's just uncertainty about what's going to happen and nervousness and being worn out by the entire process that's led them there," he said. "But when you're able to get the case settled, that relief and happiness that you can bring to their day and to their lives is really cool."

Working often these days to resolve personal injury, employment, landlord-tenant and real estate cases, Armstrong said he tries hard to offer litigants an empathetic and considerate approach in his mediations.

"I'm by no means the type of mediator that has any intention of strongarming people," he explained. "It's quite the opposite. I make it clear to them that they control the outcome at mediation. It's a voluntary process, and what I try to do is help them come to the best possible decision and get them all the information I feel like they need to make a reasoned judgment about a very important issue in their lives."

Los Angeles plaintiffs' attorney Colin M. Jones has used Armstrong to resolve nearly a dozen personal injury disputes, and he said the mediator connects well with his clients.

"There are mediators and retired judges that come off very formal and by the book and almost rigid, and I don't think that connects with clients because clients are far removed from that world," Jones said. "But Nolan is very approachable. … He's just a likable guy, and he's very easy to deal with."

Jones said he also appreciates Armstrong's thorough preparation.

"Nolan is someone who really knows the case by the time you're at mediation," Jones explained. "You can tell he's read the briefs. You can tell that he knows the nuances and what I like to call the landmines in the case. He's very good at diagnosing the good, the bad and the ugly."

Los Angeles defense attorney Erin M. Donovan used Armstrong recently to resolve a premises liability case, and she was also quick to applaud the mediator's prep work.

"What impressed me most about Nolan was his command of the facts and the issues as well as his willingness to engage with both sides before the mediation session," Donovan said. "That level of preparation led to a resolution both sides could live with."

Donovan described Armstrong as an intelligent mediator who applied a balanced approach.

"He definitely saw both sides and saw the potential pitfalls that each side had with the case," she said. "And he talked frankly about the positives and negatives if you were to go to trial."

Although Armstrong spent his 20-year career as a litigator defending clients, he said that extensive experience can be a big help to the plaintiffs he's working with these days as a mediator.

"As a former defense attorney, I know the issues that are important to the defense's assessment of the case, and specifically what the risks are," Armstrong said. "And I know how to explain those risks in a way that they're going to understand."

Santa Rosa plaintiffs' attorney Michael D. Green tried cases against Armstrong when he was still litigating and has since used him as mediator to resolve four different disputes, including wrongful death, personal injury and professional negligence matters.

"I thought he was a good lawyer, and a relatively easy guy to deal with," Green recalled. "And he's turned out to be a very good mediator."

Green agreed that Armstrong's long run defending clients can be a significant positive for plaintiffs.

"I like defense lawyers as mediators because I feel like they have been in the trenches with carriers, so they know how the insurance side thinks, frankly," Green explained. "I feel like Nolan brings that perspective, which is good."

Jones was also quick to mention Armstrong's years defending clients as a significant strong suit.

"We're always looking for mediators that have a lot of respect from insurance carriers as well as defense lawyers because that's really how cases get done," Jones said. "A mediator who just says, 'Oh, Colin, you've got the best case in the world — propose whatever amount of money you want,' that's not helpful. We need mediators who are respected on both sides to bridge the gap. And Nolan has been really successful in doing that for us on many occasions."

Armstrong said providing constructive perspective is one of his chief objectives as a mediator.

"Again, I'm not trying to pressure people," he said. "But having handled similar types of cases and seeing what drove resolution in those cases as well as trying cases myself — ending up on the right side of verdicts and the wrong side of verdicts — I hope my experience and insight can help the attorneys and decision makers come to the best possible decision."

Here are some attorneys who have used Armstrong's services: Erin M. Donovan, Musick Peeler & Garrett LLP; Colin M. Jones, Wilshire Law Firm; Michael D. Green, Abbey Weitzenberg Warren & Emery PC; Christopher F. Johnson, Morgenstern Law Group; Spencer J. Pahlke, Walkup Melodia Kelly & Schoenberger.

By Shane Nelson
Originally published in the Daily Journal





HON. LISA HART COLE (RET.)

| LOS ANGELES |

Judge Cole brings nearly 25 years on the bench to the personal injury cases she resolves. She presided over a busy independent calendar court and the prestigious Complex Litigation Department, conducting hundreds of trials and serving as statewide coordination judge for the talcum powder personal injury docket. Most recently a settlement judge in the LASC Mandatory Settlement Program, she resolved hundreds of conferences across every type of civil action—and knows how legal issues land on real clients.



JOANNA CURTIS

| LOS ANGELES |

Joanna brings more than 25 years of trial experience and a calm, steady presence to the personal injury matters she now mediates. A veteran of more than sixty jury trials, she most recently represented victims of utility-caused wildfires and serious negligence, giving her a grounded sense of the stakes in injury cases and the unpredictability of trial. Joanna creates a disciplined, respectful space where risks are weighed honestly and hard conversations happen



ZAZI POPE

| LOS ANGELES |

Zazi brings more than 35 years of high-stakes litigation experience to her work as a neutral. Leading litigation for Warner Bros., she managed hundreds of arbitrations, mediations, and trials across the full range of disputes—including personal injury and wrongful death—and developed a sharp feel for the emotional, psychological, and commercial factors behind a reluctance to compromise. Known for empathy, candor, and creative problem-solving, Zazi treats every dispute as unique, with the patience and



HON. RONALD S. PRAGER (RET.)

| SAN DIEGO |

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HON. MICHAEL A. LATIN (RET.)

| LOS ANGELES |

Judge Latin settles cases through a rare mix of deep legal knowledge, long experience, and a warm, approachable manner that puts parties at ease. Over eight years on the Los Angeles Superior Court, he facilitated more than 500 settlements while presiding over jury and bench trials and supervising seven unlimited jurisdiction civil courts, where personal injury matters were constant. Today he's among the most sought-after neutrals in Southern California.



HON. DALILA C. LYONS (RET.)

| LOS ANGELES |

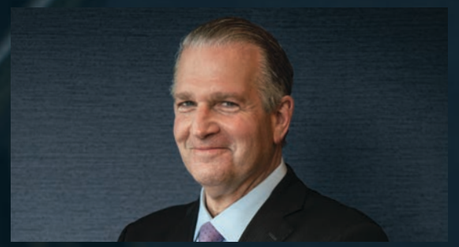
Judge Lyons spent her final three years on the Los Angeles Superior Court as a full-time settlement judge, capping 18 years resolving complex civil disputes—personal injury, eminent domain, employment, and product liability among them. A native Spanish speaker with deep ties to Latin American culture, she connects easily with diverse parties and is candid about a case's strengths and weaknesses. Known for persistence, empathy, and preparation, Judge Lyons builds the trust that moves parties toward resolution.



JAMES N. PROCTER

| LOS ANGELES |

James brings decades of trial experience to resolving personal injury disputes. A seasoned civil litigator, he tried more than 60 cases to verdict and participated in hundreds of mediations involving serious injury and complex damages. As a neutral, he quickly identifies the issues driving a case, gives parties a candid assessment of risk, and works persistently toward resolution. He was named Trial Lawyer of the Year by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association in 2008.



HON. RICHARD A. STONE (RET.)

| LOS ANGELES |

Judge Stone, a founding partner of Signature Resolution, has become a go-to neutral on the strength of his intellect, work ethic, and an almost uncanny ability to settle hard cases. Over 15 years on the Los Angeles Superior Court, he presided over unlimited jurisdiction civil matters, including some of its most difficult jury trials. He resolves personal injury, insurance, business, and real estate disputes, making thorough preparation the hallmark of every case—and counsel seek him out for resolutions reached quickly.

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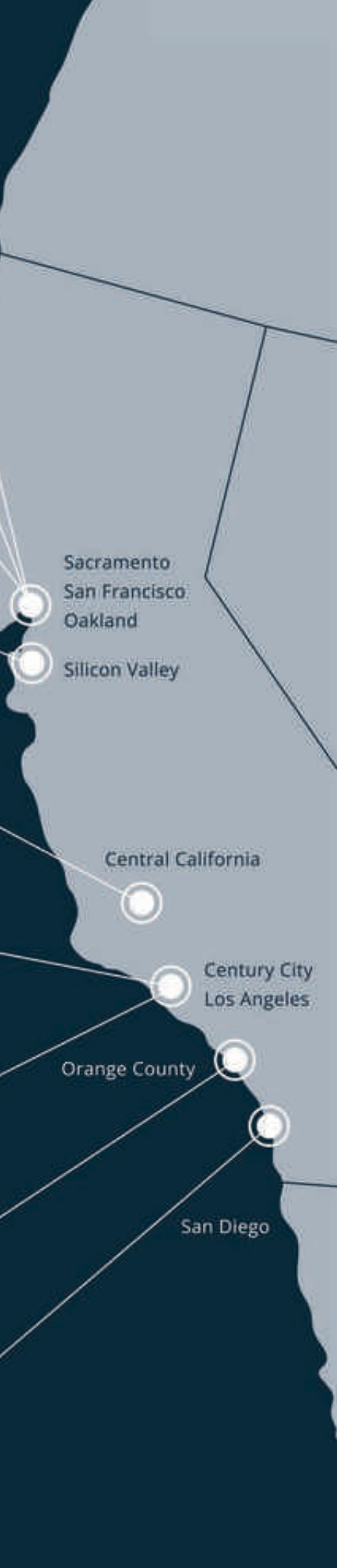












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