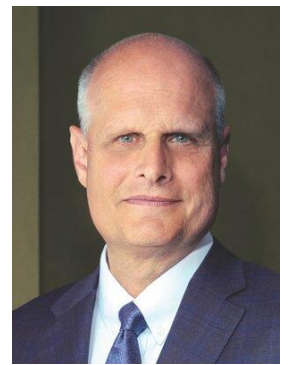


Signature Resolution Adds Well-Known JAMS Mediator

By James Mills

Law360 (August 2, 2023, 3:44 PM EDT) -- Alternative dispute resolution center Signature Resolution announced Tuesday it is bringing in one of the fathers of mediation, a man who previously was with JAMS — one of the nation's preeminent dispute resolution centers — to serve as one of its neutrals, working primarily out of its new Oakland, California, location.

Bruce A. Edwards, a former litigator who in the early 1990s left private practice to found one of the country's first mediation centers, will serve as a neutral for the 6-year-old, California-based Signature Resolution after spending the past 29 years with JAMS. He specializes in business litigation, construction, insurance, labor and employment cases as well as class actions, mass torts, personal injury and wrongful death mediation.



Bruce Edwards

During a Tuesday afternoon interview, Edwards told Law360 he is excited by the chance to join Signature Resolution and start a new chapter in his life.

"When I met this group of vibrant, talented, quality-driven professionals at Signature, I was intrigued by both the opportunity to enhance my mediation practice, take it to another level if that's at all possible, and also to grow Signature's footprint in Northern California," the 66-year-old Edwards said. "It was really that challenge that excited me and gave me reason to transition in my career, at a stage when many people are trying to decide what they want to do when they retire."

After being with JAMS for almost three decades, Edwards explained he needed a change, to shake things up in his life. Helping Signature get started in Northern California was exactly the type of change he needed. He said he left JAMS on good terms, is still friendly with people there and has no hard feelings about his departure.

"I leave in my wake a quality institution in JAMS and many friends and colleagues. I certainly wish them all the best," Edwards said. "They are doing a great job of mediating cases not just here in California but around the country."

He firmly believes in meditation and still enjoys helping people work through disputes.

"Being invited into someone's dispute is a sacred invitation and should be respected above all else," said Edwards. "The level of emotional and psychological preparation to assist clients requires considerable self-reflection, training and mental focus. Mediators have the power to affect change in their clients'

lives, and I embrace this process with humility, patience and curiosity. I look forward to continuing my mediation through this new role at Signature Resolution."

Dario Higuchi, Signature Resolution's founding partner and managing member, is thrilled to welcome Edwards.

"Bruce's extensive experience in handling various disputes over the decades has made him a pioneer in the mediation and arbitration industry," Higuchi said in a statement. "His work is highly regarded, making him a valuable addition to our panel."

Signature Resolution was founded in 2017 and has locations in downtown Los Angeles, Century City, San Diego and Oakland, as well as virtual services. Its neutrals, including trial attorneys and respected judges, specialize in virtually every civil practice area.

Edwards, an Oakland native, earned his law degree in 1981 from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, now known as the University of California, College of the Law, San Francisco.

He worked nine years with litigation firm Sedgwick Detert Moran & Arnold LLP in San Francisco, eventually making partner. However, he was not satisfied with the legal system, which often seemed to put opponents at polar opposites rather than helping them find common ground. He began experimenting with bringing people together in unscripted ways to talk about conflict, drawing on his educational background in both law and psychology.

Inspired by the progress and success of these conversations, he left his law practice in 1991 to establish one of the first mediation companies in the United States. He co-founded the Bates Edwards Group, and through a partnership with Endispute, the firm grew to become the largest attorney mediation company in the country.

Edwards also played a pivotal role as co-founder, chief mediator, executive vice president and eventually chairman of the board of Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services, which is now known as JAMS. In 1994, JAMS merged with Endispute/Bates Edwards Group.

In addition to acting as a mediator, Edwards also trains people how to be mediators through his Edwards Mediation Academy, an online training platform. He also has taught in-person mediation training in over two dozen countries. Similarly, he spends time promoting mediation here and abroad, while also working to get officials of various countries to adopt mediation as a dispute resolution option.

"I think this world is in desperate need of dispute resolution professionals beyond just commercial litigation," he said. "The more that I can have an impact in trying to expand the profession in a variety of directions, the more I'll look back on my career someday and see myself fulfilled."

--Editing by John C. Davenport.