

## Signature Resolution Moves Into Central Calif. Via Partnership

By James Mills

*Law360 (April 2, 2025, 9:47 AM EDT)* -- The alternative dispute resolution center Signature Resolution is expanding into Central California by partnering with Bakersfield-based Common Ground Resolutions.

The Common Ground Resolutions office at 8500 Stockdale Highway in Bakersfield and the three neutrals associated with Common Ground — retired state Judge David R. Lampe, retired state Judge Stephen D. Schuett and retired litigator Thomas P. Feher — are all now part of Signature Resolution, the service announced Tuesday.

In a Tuesday interview, Judge Lampe, who founded Common Ground Resolution in April 2022, told Law360 that Common Ground and Signature started talking about joining forces in late 2024 and quickly had an agreement.

"It just seemed like a natural to bring Signature Resolution exposure into Central California and take advantage of their longtime presence in Southern California for me," Judge Lampe said.

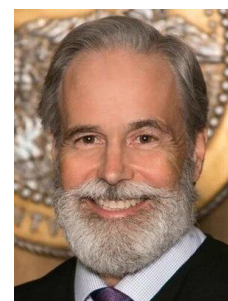
Judge Lampe couldn't be more excited to bring more mediation and arbitration services to Central California.

"Signature has appropriately made itself the premier dispute resolution service in California," Judge Lampe said. "Being able to provide them an opportunity in Central California and me getting an opportunity to join their practice is just a fantastic idea. I feel like I'm joining the premier neutral service and platform that there is."

For now, the signage on the Bakersfield building will remain Common Ground Resolution. But Judge Lampe said that as word spreads in the legal community and the city in general, the signage will eventually change to Signature Resolution.

Signature Resolution was founded in 2017 in Los Angeles, opening offices in Orange County and San Diego soon after. In the past two years, Signature has begun opening offices in the San Francisco Bay Area.

"Our expansion into Central California marks a significant milestone for Signature Resolution, and we are honored to welcome Common Ground Resolutions to our firm, along with Judge Lampe, Judge Schuett



David R. Lampe



Stephen D. Schuett



Thomas P. Feher

and Thomas Feher," Dario Higuchi, founding partner and managing member at Signature Resolution, said in a statement. "Their deep roots in the region, combined with Common Ground Resolutions' strong track record, provides top-tier dispute resolution services to attorneys and clients in Central California and beyond."

Judge Lampe, who served on the Kern County Superior Court for 15 years, started planning to open Common Ground Resolution a few years before he stepped down.

"I was always aware that the resources for mediation and arbitrations and alternative dispute resolution were very narrow in Central California. They are abundant in the metropolitan areas, but not so much here," Judge Lampe said. "I also knew that a number of the people who were doing mediations and arbitrations around here — lawyers and retired judges — were officially going to retire. So, when I stepped down from the bench, I started Common Ground in April 2022. There was a need for it."

Judge Lampe, who earned his law degree in 1977 from Santa Clara University School of Law, worked for 30 years as a civil trial attorney with Borton Petrini & Conron LLP and then LeBeau Thelen LLP in Bakersfield. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed him to the Kern County Superior Court in 2007.

He handles general commercial and business litigation cases, as well as major personal injury cases, employment cases, and wage and hour cases.

Judge Schuett earned his law degree in 1979 from UCLA School of Law. He worked in private practice and as in-house counsel for several years before joining the Office of the Kern County Counsel for 25 years, ultimately serving as assistant county counsel. He was appointed to the Kern County Superior Court by Schwarzenegger in 2010 and retired at the end of 2023, joining Common Ground shortly thereafter.

Judge Schuett, who was supervising judge of the family law division in Kern County while on the bench, handles family law matters as well as civil litigation, business valuations, property disputes and child custody matters.

Feher earned his law degree in 1990 from the University of San Diego School of Law and worked for 34 years with LeBeau Thelen in Bakersfield. Upon his retirement at the end of 2024, he moved into mediation.

Feher was a general civil law attorney and now will be handling litigation cases including employment law, class actions, personal injury cases, probate and trust disputes, business litigation and real estate matters.

--Editing by Robert Rudinger.