



Hon. Michael Johnson (Ret.)

Mediator • Arbitrator • Referee

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Judge Johnson brings a 41 year legal career to his dispute resolution practice – 20 years as a Los Angeles Superior Court Judge, and 21 years as a civil litigator specializing in employment law and business litigation.

In his judicial career, Judge Johnson was a popular member of the bench, known for his diligence and productivity. He presided over a downtown independent calendar court, where he conducted trials, motions, pretrial proceedings, and settlement conferences in a wide variety of civil matters, including employment, business litigation, civil rights, real estate, and personal injury. Earlier in his career, Judge Johnson presided over criminal felony trials, including high profile complex trials at the downtown criminal courts building. In total, he presided over more than 400 civil and criminal trials – providing a valuable perspective for dispute resolution. Judge Johnson culminated his judicial career in 2017 with an appointment as a Justice Pro Tem of the California Court of Appeal, 2nd Appellate District.

In his career as an attorney, Judge Johnson was a partner in a major national law firm. He engaged in trial and appellate work in state and federal courts across the country, focusing on employment law, business litigation, and civil rights. Judge Johnson held leadership and management positions in his law firm, served as Chair of the State Bar Labor & Employment Section, and was twice appointed by the Governor to the California Fair Employment & Housing Commission.

JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

Civil Experience, 2010-2018.

- Civil Independent Calendar Court at the Stanley Mosk Civil Courthouse in Downtown Los Angeles. Managed a docket of approximately 450 civil cases from filing through trial or disposition, in the areas of business, employment, contract, real estate, personal injury, and other civil disputes.
- Duties included a daily motion calendar, jury trials, court trials, case management, and settlement conferences. Participated in the court's settlement programs for employment, business, and personal injury cases.

Appellate Experience, 2017.

- Appointed as a Justice Pro Tem of the California Court of Appeal, 2nd Appellate District, March through July 2017. Served as a member of Division 3, hearing appeals from the Superior Court in civil, criminal, dependency and family law cases.
- Authored 26 opinions and participated in 43 additional appeals with opinions authored by others.

Criminal Experience, 1997-2010.

- Complex felony trial court at the Foltz Criminal Justice Center in Downtown Los Angeles. Managed a docket of selected complex felony cases through trial or disposition involving major crimes, multi-defendant cases, death penalty cases, white collar crimes, and gang crimes.
- Criminal calendar court and felony trials at the Foltz Criminal Justice Center and Compton Courthouse. Managed a docket of cases through pre-trial proceedings and conducted assigned trials involving all manner of felony crimes.

GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Member of the California Fair Employment and Housing Commission, 1987-1991, 1995-1997.

- Member of a quasi-judicial board that decided employment and housing discrimination claims, adopted civil rights regulations and policies, and conducted civil rights hearings.
- Attended monthly public hearings, participated in joint decisions and authored separate opinions in appeals, and contributed to the preparation and approval of administrative regulations.

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Baker & Hostetler, Los Angeles. National law firm of over 500 attorneys.

- General Partner, 1990-1997.
- Chair of the Los Angeles Labor & Employment group; member of the Executive Committee.

McCutchen Black Verleger & Shea, Los Angeles. California-based law firm of approximately 75 attorneys.

- General Partner, 1984-1990. Associate, 1976-1984.
- Chair of the firm's Labor & Employment group; member of the Executive Committee; Partner in charge of attorney hiring.

EDUCATION

University of California, Hastings College of the Law, San Francisco.

- Juris Doctor; Honors Graduate; U.C. Towne Scholarship.

University of California, Los Angeles.

- Bachelor of Arts in Political Science; Phi Beta Kappa; Magna Cum Laude Graduate.

SPECIAL TRAINING

- 42 hours of mediation training, Straus Institute at Pepperdine, Mediating the Litigated Case, 2018.
- Advanced training in ESI discovery by eDiscovery Education Center, 2017. Certified as an eDiscovery advanced specialist.
- 30 hours of mediation training, Los Angeles County Bar Association, Civic Mediation Project, 2015.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS & ACTIVITIES

Judicial Associations

- California Judges Association; Los Angeles Superior Court Judges Association

California State Bar, Labor & Employment Section

- Chair, 1995-1996. Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Executive Committee Member

Other Bar Memberships & Activities

- Admitted to practice in all California state courts; all U.S. District Courts of California; U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th and 3rd Circuits; U.S. Supreme Court.
- Member of the California State Bar, and Los Angeles County Bar Association. Participated in various sections and committees.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Constitutional Rights Foundation

- Mock Trial Competition Judge for high school students in Southern California, 1997-Present. Selected as Judge of the Year in 2006.

Woodrow Wilson High School

- As an attorney, established a partnership program between Baker & Hostetler and this East Los Angeles high school. Received the American Bar Association Partnership Award.