



Hon. Francisco F. Firmat
Orange County Superior Court Judge (Ret.)



The Honorable Francisco F. Firmat brings a wealth of experience in helping parties settle their differences at mediation. His 27-year courtroom experience includes long-term assignments in civil, family law and complex litigation panels, with hundreds of jury trials and thousands of bench trials. He has completed over 6,000 settlement conferences or mediations.

Driven by faith and service, Judge Firmat is a natural peacemaker with exceptional mediation skills. In addition to his lengthy judicial experience, Judge Firmat has received training in mediation through Pepperdine's Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution in 1996, 2005 and 2008, and has attended further programs since his retirement from the bench in 2013.

Hon. Francisco Firmat has been honored by numerous legal and community organizations. In recognition of his extensive efforts to improve the family law court experience for the Orange County community, Judge Firmat was awarded the *2008 Benjamin Aranda III Access to Justice Award* co-sponsored by the State Bar of California, Judicial Council of California and the California Judges Association.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Business & Commercial Contract
- Complex Litigation
- Employment
- Family Law
- Real Estate
- Homeowners Association
- Personal Injury
- Professional Malpractice

JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

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| • <i>Civil</i> | (1985 – 2013)
<i>15 years</i> |
| • <i>Family Law (Supervising Judge for 5½ years)</i> | <i>7½ years</i> |
| • <i>Complex Litigation</i> | <i>2½ years</i> |

LITIGATION EXPERIENCE

Sole Practitioner (Fullerton, California) (1976 – 1985)

EDUCATION

Western State College of Law, Juris Doctorate	(1976)
University of Southern California, Graduate Studies	(1973)
California State University Los Angeles, Bachelor's Degree	(1972)

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

- 2016 ADL Marcus Kaufman Jurisprudence Award
- 2015 Western State College of Law Lifetime Achievement Award
- 2013 Orange County Bar Association, Franklin G. West Award
- 2009 American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Distinguished Jurist Award
- 2009 Orange County Hispanic Bar Association, Jurist of the Year
- 2008 State Bar of California, Judicial Council of California, and California Judges Association, Benjamin Aranda Access to Justice Award (The "Aranda" is the most prestigious Award given jointly by the Judicial Council, the State Bar, and the California Judges Association.)
- 2007 Orange County Women Lawyers' Association, Judge of the Year
- 2005 Orange County Bar Association – Family Law Section, Judge of the Year
- 2002 American Board of Trial Advocates – Orange County Chapter, Civility Award
- 2001 Consumer Attorneys of California, Judge of the Year
- 1996 Orange County Bar Association – Business Litigation Section, Judge of the Year
- 1996 Orange County Trial Lawyers Association, Judge of the Year
- 1994 Orange County Hispanic Bar Association, Judge of the Year
- 1992 Orange County Bar Association & Orange County Bar Foundation, Harmon G. Scoville Award

COMMUNITY SERVICE RECOGNITION

- 2013 Kids First, Recognition
- 2004 Loyola Institute for Spirituality, Hearts on Fire Award
- 2001 Thomas More Society – OC Chapter, Thomas More Award

SPEAKING & INSTRUCTION

- During his judicial career, Judge Firmat was a lecturer at different times for The Rutter Group, Orange County Bar Association, Consumer Attorneys of California, Center for Judicial Education and Research, American Board of Trial Advocates, Continuing Education of the Bar, Orange County Hispanic Bar Association and others.
- Western State College of Law (Assistant Professor of Trial Practice, 1994 – 2012)

PERSONAL

- Active with Daniel's Inn of Orange County
- Teaches workshops on prayer and contemplation
- Fluent in Spanish

VIDEO INTRODUCTION TO JUDGE FIRMAT

On January 17, 2013, Hon. Francisco Firmat received the Orange County Bar Association's Franklin G. West Award, the OCBA's highest honor. For a glimpse into the character, values and judicial philosophy of this jurist, please [click here](#) to see the video of the introduction and acceptance remarks from the award ceremony.