



Hon. Barbara R. Johnson Judge of the Superior Court (Ret.)



Available for mediations, arbitrations, discovery reference, and private trials

Hon. Barbara R. Johnson retired from the Los Angeles Superior Court in 2020 after 27 years on the bench. She enjoyed a distinguished judicial career as a respected trial judge with an uncompromising approach to legal adjudication, with assignments in Probate, the Appellate Division, and the Criminal Department. Her lifelong commitment to promoting justice and making decisions based on fairness and reason now extend to her work as a Mediator, Arbitrator, Referee, and Private Judge with ADR Services, Inc.

For the last several years of her judicial career, Judge Johnson served in a Probate Court assignment, drawing upon her prior experience as a probate lawyer to oversee a wide range of matters, including breach of fiduciary duty, contested conservatorships, contested guardianships, trust and estate accounting disputes, contested real property transfers, trust contests, trust administration disputes, and will contests. She presided over pretrials, trials, and the fees, accountings, motions, and discovery associated therewith. In addition, she participated in numerous settlement conferences and was instrumental in helping the parties negotiate mutually beneficial agreements for the resolution of their disputes.

Prior to her judicial appointment, Judge Johnson began her legal career as a sole practitioner handling probate, family law, landlord tenant, and criminal matters. She then joined the City of Inglewood as a Deputy City Attorney and later as an Assistant City Attorney. She remained there until her appointment to the bench in 1993.

Judge Johnson is a graduate of Yale University and California Western School of Law.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Breach of Fiduciary Duty
- Contested Conservatorships
- Contested Guardianships
- Trust & Estate Accounting Disputes
- Arbitration
- Contested Real Property Transfers
- Trust Contests
- Trust Administration Disputes
- Will Contests
- Discovery & Judicial Reference

JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

Judge of the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles 2000-2020

- Probate Department, 2016-2020

Wide-ranging Probate experience, including conservatorships, guardianships, estates and trusts, pretrials, trials, and the fees, accountings, motions, and discovery associated therewith. Participated in numerous settlement conferences and negotiated mutually beneficial agreements between parties.

- Appellate Division, 2013-2016
Decided cases on appeal to the Los Angeles Superior Court's Appellate Division, including writ petitions, limited jurisdiction civil cases and misdemeanor criminal cases.
- Felony Trials, 2000-2013
Extensive criminal misdemeanor and felony trial experience.

Judge of the Municipal Court of California, County of Los Angeles 1993-2000

- Appointed by Governor Pete Wilson in 1993
- Elevated to the Superior Court in 2000

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Inglewood City Attorney's Office 1985-1993
Assistant City Attorney, City Planning and Land Use, City Business Tax Compliance
Deputy City Attorney, Criminal Prosecutor
- Private Practice, Inglewood, California 1980-1985
Areas of Practice: Probate, Family Law, Landlord Tenant, Criminal

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Hall of Fame Inductee, John M. Langston Bar Association of Los Angeles
- Judge of the Year, National Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division
- Judge of the Year, Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, Black Lawyers

EDUCATION

- Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution at Pepperdine, "Mediating the Litigated Case", 2021
- African American Board Leadership Institute, 2020
- California Western School of Law, Juris Doctor
- Yale University, Bachelor of Arts

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- California Judges Association, Annual Meeting Committee, Speaker (on Time Management)
- Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, Past President
- John M. Langston Bar Association of Los Angeles, Member
- Inglewood District Bar Association, Past President
- National Bar Association, Judicial Council, Presenter/Speaker at international meetings in Paris, France and South Africa
- Los Angeles Superior Court, Constitutional Rights Moot Court Judge, Grand Jury Committee, Community Action Committee

SPEAKING PRESENTATIONS

- Jury Trial Efficiency
- Voir Dire and Trial Strategy
- Probate Strategies
- Introduction to Probate

REPRESENTATIVE CASES

- Contest involving validity of trust and testamentary capacity to execute and/or amend trust. Undue influence or duress in execution of will and or trust.
- Dispute involving creditor lien holder, Medi-Cal seeking to recover reimbursement for provided services in a 3rd party judgment; Disputed question whether judgment arose from a wrongful death claim or a survival claim.
- Competing petitions for guardianship among non-parent family members; competing petitions for Conservatorship among family members; competing petitions for Conservatorship between family and non family members.
- Trust contest questioning whether Trustee breached his fiduciary duty in administering the estate by making expenditures that were not a benefit to the estate and beneficiaries.
- Unlawful Detainer case involving relationship between rent paid by tenant who was also an apartment manager. Questioned whether notice to pay rent or quit was properly alleged once employment relationship was terminated though (former employee) tenant remained on premises. Issues involved Civil Code section 1174.21 and 1942.4.
- Dispute as to whether real property transfer was a fraudulent donative transfer in violation of the “care custodian” presumption of Probate Code section 21360, et seq. Fiduciary responsibilities in administration of conservatorship property.
- Will contest regarding validity of the will, undue influence, competing adopted child and non-family beneficiary.
- Dispute concerning “contingency” attorney fee and costs in settled case.
- Interpretation of Trust instrument giving life estate in separate property to surviving spouse where administration of property questions the fiduciary’s failure to conserve property’s value.
- Several cases involving trust and estate accountings, attorney fee and costs disputes, administration disputes, attorney substitutions fee disputes; propriety of conservator administration costs and fees.