



HON. SUSAN LOPEZ-GISS

Judge of the Superior Court (Ret.)

www.JudgeLopezGiss.com



Hon. Susan Lopez-Giss (Ret.) joined ADR Services, Inc. in 2022 after 15 years of distinguished service as a Judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court.

After graduating from Loyola Law School, Judge Lopez-Giss joined the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, where she served 30 years as a prosecutor and later Assistant City Attorney. She developed a groundbreaking domestic violence prosecution program that was implemented statewide, only one of such programs in the country at the time. She was instrumental in drafting a domestic violence prosecution manual, filing guidelines, and restraining order statutes, and helped train law enforcement and medical personnel across the country. Judge Lopez-Giss developed guidelines for the handling of child abuse and child sexual abuse and served on interagency councils that addressed child abuse and neglect that included training for mandatory reporting. She also reviewed and personally oversaw the prosecution of hundreds of such cases. For her pioneering work developing these programs, Judge Lopez-Giss was presented with a Resolution by the Mayor and the Los Angeles City Council.

Judge Lopez-Giss later became the City Attorney's Assistant General Counsel for the legal division of the Department of Water and Power. She holds the distinction of being the first woman to reach that position. In this role, Judge Lopez-Giss represented LADWP in matters involving employment, contracts, regulatory matters as mandated by the Federal Energy Commission, the California Public Utility Code, water issues, rate structures, tort, workers' compensation, and environmental issues. She advised the City Council and the Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commission and provided advice on legal questions involving interpretation of the Charter and the State Constitution. Additionally, she was individually responsible for representing the commercial interests of LADWP, which included bankruptcy matters, bond issuances (for over \$1 billion in LADWP bond issuances and refinancings), and litigation of fraud and false claims actions. It was in this capacity that she litigated the City of Los Angeles v. Fleishman Hillard Inc. matter, which resulted in a total recovery of \$5.7 million to the City.

Following a remarkable legal career, Judge Lopez-Giss was appointed to the bench in 2007 and served 15 years as a Judge, with the entirety of her time on the bench devoted to Family Law. Judge Lopez-Giss presided over thousands of cases involving all types of contested and complex Family Law matters, including parentage cases, custody and visitation issues, child and spousal support, business valuation, and property division. In addition to issuing thousands of rulings, Judge Lopez-Giss became known for actively and successfully settling her cases. Her strong legal mind, coupled with an emphasis on collaboration to resolve family disputes, has resulted in her reputation as an effective negotiator, problem solver, and adjudicator.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- **Business & Contract:** breach of contract; bankruptcy matters; bond issuances; fraud
- **Family Law:** parentage; custody; visitation; child and spousal support; business valuation
- **Government & Statutory Interpretation:** California False Claims Act litigation; government contracts; Federal Energy Commission; California Public Utility Code; water rights issues; rate structures; government tort liability; government energy environmental law
- **Property and Neighbor Disputes:** boundary disputes; property damage; nuisance
- **Personal Injury:** sexual abuse; domestic violence; harassment

FAMILY LAW EXPERTISE

- **Parentage Cases**
- **Custody:** move-away; abuse allegations; parental alienation; educational issues (including psychological, developmental, emotional, socialization); medical issues; co-parenting failures
- **Visitation:** allocation of time; distance; best interests determinations
- **Child and Spousal Support:** imputation of income; allegations of hidden assets
- **Business Valuation:** sole ownership, partnerships, corporations; entertainment industry: bonuses vs. loans; real estate, rental income; depreciation vs. actual assets

JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

Los Angeles Superior Court, 2007-2022

- Judge of the Superior Court, Family Law Division, 2007-2022
- Personnel and Budget Committee, 2015-2022
- Facilities Committee, 2017-2020
- Los Angeles Superior Court Executive Committee, 2011-2013

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, 1976-2006

- Assistant General Counsel, Department of Water and Power, 2004-2006
- Assistant City Attorney, 1991-2004
- Criminal Prosecutor, 1976-1991

Los Angeles Municipal Court, 1974-1976

- Law Clerk, Law and Motion, for Hon. Robert Fainer and Hon. Warren Deering
- Drafted opinions for the judges on motions relating to discovery, jurisdiction, interpleader, demurrers, and summary judgment.

EDUCATION

- Loyola University School of Law, J.D., 1974
- University of California, Los Angeles, A.B. Political Science, 1971
- Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution, Certificate of Completion, "Mediating the Litigated Case", 2021 (42 hours of mediation training)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- East District Judicial Excellence Award, 2007
- Recognized by the Los Angeles Daily Journal as one of the "Top 75 Women Litigators in the State", 2005
- Honorary Service Award Certificate from California Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students for special recognition of outstanding service to children and youth, 1994
- Commendation by Ventura County Superintendent of Schools and the Constitutional Rights Foundation for participation in Mock Trial Competition, 1991
- Presented with a Resolution by the Mayor and Los Angeles City Council in recognition for developing the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office Domestic Violence Program, 1981

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Judge Lopez-Giss has been recognized throughout her career for her staunch dedication to charitable causes. She served as a member of the Board of Directors of the UCLA Jonsson Cancer Center from 2005 to 2016, on the National Selective Service Committee from 1996 to 2007, is actively involved in the American Friends of the Hebrew University and the 1939 Club, and is a lifetime member of the California Women Lawyers Association.