



HON. PAUL T. SUZUKI (Ret.)

Mediator • Arbitrator • Referee



PROBATE, ESTATES & TRUSTS EXPERTISE

- Probate of Estate Contests
- Trust Contests
- Undue Influence and Elder Abuse
- Spousal Petition Contests
- Conservatorships
- Guardianships

JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

Los Angeles Superior Court, Judge

2010-2022

Judge Suzuki served as a Judge of the Superior Court for 12 years. He was last assigned to Long Cause Probate Trials in Department 3 at Stanley Mosk Courthouse, handling complex probate trials lasting five or more days.

Judge Suzuki has extensive experience presiding over trials involving various petitions for will contests, trust disputes, interpretation of testamentary documents, breach of fiduciary duty, removal of estate representative and/or trustee, appointment of private professional fiduciaries, accounting and surcharges, reformation of trusts, determination of heirs and beneficiaries, Probate 850 petitions, mental capacity issues, undue influence claims, financial elder abuse, restraining orders, conservatorship of persons and/or estates, guardianships, real property claims, enforcement of settlement agreements, spousal petitions, and court-ordered related civil disputes of quiet title, unlawful detainer, fraud, etc. to be tried with probate cases.

During his tenure, Judge Suzuki also served on court committees for Superior Court Commissioner Selection, Arbitration/Alternative Dispute Resolution, Bench and Bar, Diversity, Community Outreach, Security, Traffic, and Litigation.

Los Angeles Superior Court, Commissioner

2006-2010

Judge Suzuki began his judicial career as a Superior Court Commissioner, handling misdemeanor criminal jury trials and issuing emergency protective orders for domestic violence.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Law Offices of Suzuki & Ito

1978-2005

Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Suzuki served as Managing Partner of a boutique law firm and maintained a general civil litigation practice, representing private individual, business, and institutional clients primarily in the areas of business, real property, real estate broker litigation, plaintiff and defense personal injury, and medical malpractice litigation. In addition, he represented public sector clients such as the Metropolitan Transportation Agency, Resolution Trust Corporation, Community Redevelopment Agency, Los Angeles Unified School District, and served on a Los Angeles City conflict panel involving Los Angeles police officers. Judge Suzuki has conducted numerous jury and non-jury trials and has argued successfully twice before the California Supreme Court.

Legal Aid Foundations of Long Beach and Riverside

1975-1978

Upon obtaining his J.D. from UCLA School of Law, Judge Suzuki began his legal career working as a poverty law lawyer, providing legal services to indigent persons.

EDUCATION

- “Mediating the Litigated Case”, Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution (40 hours), 2022.
 - J.D., University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law, 1974.
 - B.A. in Public Service, University of California, Los Angeles, 1971.
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SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- USC Gould School of Law, 48th Annual Trusts & Estates Conference. Keynote Luncheon Speaker: “Judicial Guardianship Evaluation Worksheet” (11/11/22).
 - ADR Services, Inc. MCLE Webinar. Panelist and Co-Presenter: “Fiduciaries and Trustees: The Good, The Bad & The Ugly” (08/10/22).
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COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Asian Business Association

1984-2000

Judge Suzuki is a native of Los Angeles, having been born in East Los Angeles and raised in South Central Los Angeles. During World War II, his parents were incarcerated in an internment camp in Wyoming. After leaving the camp, the family moved back to Los Angeles and opened a dry cleaner business in South Central, which also served as the family home. After opening his own law firm, Judge Suzuki joined the Asian Business Association in 1984 and was a member of the Board of Directors for 13 years, serving as President in 1992 and Chairperson of the Corporate Advisory Committee in 1993. The Asian Business Association worked with major public corporations and government entities to create strategic business relationships for Asian-owned businesses throughout Southern California.

During the Los Angeles Civil Unrest of 1992, Judge Suzuki worked tirelessly to organize forums between the Black Business Association and Asian Business Association, known as Unity Meetings, to improve relations between the two ethnic business communities. The annual Unity Forum eventually expanded to include the Latin Business Association and women business owners' groups.

Federal Judicial Advisory Committee

1997-1999

Member of 10-person U.S. State Senator Committee to assist in selecting Federal District Court Judges.

City of Los Angeles, Salary Review Commission

1982

Appointed by Chairperson of the Los Angeles City Council to review and make recommendations regarding the salary of the Mayor of Los Angeles, City Council, and City Attorney.

Optimist International, Secretary

1979-1981

Boy Scouts, Troop 764, Assistant Scout Master

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Nominated and selected as a national and international member of the “Lawyers of Distinction” for the year 2023 as a mediator and referee.

- Letter of Appreciation from Senator Barbara Boxer for service on Federal Judicial Appointment Committee, 1999
- Who's Who, Honored Professional in Executives and Business, 1998
- Asian Business Association, Member of the Year, 1995
- Various Certificates of Appreciation and Recognition for community work done during the 1992 Los Angeles Civil Unrest, from Senator Barbara Boxer; U.S. Congresspersons Howard Berman, Lucile Roybal-Allard, Maxine Waters, Estaban Torres, Walter Tucker III; State Treasurer Matt Fong; Los Angeles County Supervisors Mike Antonovich, Gloria Molina, Yvonne Burke, Zev Yaroslavsky, Deane Dana; Los Angeles City Council Members Mark Ridley Thomas, Rita Walters, Jackie Goldberg, Mike Hernandez, Richard Alarcon; Office of City Attorney James Hahn; Torrance City Councilperson George Nakano; State Assemblymembers Willie Brown, Speaker of Assembly; Antonio Villaraigosa, Sheila Kuhl, Louis Caldera, Barbara Friedman, Phil Hawkins, Grace Napolitano, Paula Boland, Diane Martinez, Wally Knox; and State Senators Don Rodgers, Hirshel Rosenthal, Richard Polanco, Robert Beverly, Hilda Solis, Tom Hayden, Dick Mountjoy, and Ralph Dills, 1995
- Los Angeles Business Journal, Tribute to Los Angeles Top Business Leaders, Certificate of Appreciation, 1993
- Asian Business Association, Outstanding Leadership Award, 1992

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Judge Suzuki was a member of the Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Association from 1982 to 1986, and was a member of the Southern California Defense Attorneys Association from 1988 to 1993. In addition, he was a member of the Los Angeles County Bar Association from 1984 to 2006. He was a Licensed California Real Estate Broker (1980).