



# HON. ANITA SANTOS (RET.)

*Family Law Specialist*



Hon. Anita Santos (Ret.) joined ADR Services, Inc. in 2022 after eight years as a Judge of the Superior Court for the County of Contra Costa, with assignments in the Family Law Division, Felony Criminal Trials, the Juvenile Division, and a Domestic Violence Calendar. During her judicial tenure, Judge Santos presided over hundreds of contested and complex family law matters involving child custody and visitation, child and spousal support, marital dissolution, division of property, relocation, and tracing disputes. As her final assignment prior to retirement, Judge Santos presided over hundreds of domestic violence restraining order hearings and trials. These cases were both short cause and full evidentiary trials, and many included custody and visitation, property control, and child and spousal support issues.

Prior to her years as a Judge presiding over family law matters, Judge Santos served as a Child Support Commissioner for two years. As a Commissioner, Judge Santos presided over thousands of short cause hearings and hundreds of long cause hearings regarding child support, temporary spousal support, and the calculation of the same, and attorney fee requests. This included hearings and trials over income available for support, calculation of income for those self-employed, overtime and bonus income, imputation of income, earning capacity, deviation from guideline support, determining the date(s) of separation, tax exemptions, hardships, retroactivity of support, attorney fees, jurisdiction, disclosures and/or disclosure violations, alternative calculation options, parenting time determination, child care costs and reimbursements, and child health-related costs & reimbursements.

Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Santos was a sole practitioner in an active and successful family law practice handling dissolutions, legal separations, parentage, child custody and visitation, spousal and child support, property division, pre and post-nuptial agreements, and restraining orders. She also served as a Deputy District Attorney for the County of Contra Costa handling all levels of criminal prosecution, including sexual assault and homicide.

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## LEGAL EXPERIENCE

### JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

County of Contra Costa, 2014-2022

- Appointed December 2014, Retired July 2022.
- Assigned to Family Law Division, Felony Criminal Trials, Juvenile Division, Domestic Violence Calendar.

### SUPERIOR COURT COMMISSIONER

Contra Costa County Superior Court, 2012-2014

- Judicial officer presiding over a high volume parentage and child support calendar with an average of 80 cases per week.
- Decisions and written orders rendered in each case.
- Calendar management and coordination with attorneys and staff from the *Department of Child Support Services*.

## **LAW OFFICE OF ANITA SANTOS**

Fairfield, CA, 2008-2012

- Owner and sole practitioner in an active and successful family law practice handling dissolutions, legal separations, parentage, child custody and visitation, spousal and child support, property division, pre and post-nuptial agreements, and restraining orders.

## **DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

Office of the District Attorney, Contra Costa County, 1997-2008

- All levels of criminal prosecution including homicide, sexual assault, career criminals, robbery, assaults, insurance fraud, juvenile crimes, and misdemeanors.
- Litigated 58 jury trials and 43 court trials to verdict.
- Supervised felony preliminary hearing team, managing 40-60 hearings each week.

## **PRIOR EXPERIENCE**

### **POLICE OFFICER**

City of Concord, 1994-1997

- Patrol Officer for a diverse city of 115,000.
- Emergency and non-emergency public calls for service requiring the interpretation and enforcement of all state and local laws.
- President, 123<sup>rd</sup> Basic Police Academy Class, Los Medanos College.

### **POLICE DISPATCHER**

City of Concord, 1993-1994

University of California, Berkeley, Police Department, 1987-1993

- Received and prioritized emergency and routine requests for police services.
- Coordinated all levels of response and communicated to law enforcement personnel on multiple radio frequencies.
- Routine use and dissemination of national, state, and local criminal information systems.

## **EDUCATION**

### **University of California, Hastings College of the Law**

- Juris Doctor, 1991

### **University of California, Berkeley**

- Bachelor of Arts, Ethnic Studies, 1987
- Bachelor of Arts, Sociology, 1987

### **Solano Community College, Fairfield**

- Associate of Arts, Liberal Arts, 1984

## **HONORS**

- **California Women Lawyers, Rose Bird Memorial Award, 2020**
- **UC Hastings, Contra Costa Alumna of the Year, 2019**

## ORGANIZATIONS & ACTIVITIES

- **California Judges Association**, Executive Board Member, 2017-2018; Member, 2014-Present
- **National Association of Women Judges**, Director of District 14 for California & Nevada, 2016-2018; Life Member, 2016-Present
- **California Court Commissioners Association**, Board of Directors 2014-2015
- **Legal Education Trainer**
  - Government Benefits and Support, 2014
  - Imputation of Income for Support, 2013
- **Contra Costa County Bar Association**, 2008-2012
  - Co-Chair, Diversity Section
  - Delegate and Lobbyist, California Conference of Delegates
- **Black Women Lawyers of Northern CA**, Life Member
- **California Association of Black Lawyers**, Judicial Section Life Member, 2012-Present
- **Association of African American California Judicial Officers**, Founding & Life Member, 2018-Present; Board of Directors, 2018-2021

## FAMILY LAW CASE SUMMARIES

- **Division of Extensive Property, Trial on Reserved Issues:** An 8 year marriage involving multiple pre and post marriage real properties (separate and community), property exchanges, securities, including vested and unvested stock options and awards, IRAs, deferred compensation accounts, and investment accounts, Watts & Epstein claims, Moore-Marsden issues, tracing disputes, comingling, transmutation claims, and mutual claims of fraud and misappropriation. A Judgment on Reserved Issues was issued resolving all claims and a final equalization payment ordered.
- **Post-Judgment Spousal Support Trial:** A 19 year marriage with a stipulated judgment that included an amount for spousal support to wife with a right to “review” the spousal support amount and duration after four years. The review was requested by husband and the primary issue was the income of each party. Husband continued to have an ownership interest in a golf course. Wife was employed with a minimal hourly wage. The challenge was determining husbands’ income. There was no business valuation and the only evidence was the testimony of the co-owner/accountant, with extensive comingling of personal and business expenses. A decision was issued after a multi-day trial and the mutual requests for attorney fees were denied.
- **Post-Judgment Spousal Support Trial:** A 19 year marriage with a stipulated judgment that included a spousal support order to wife for two additional post-judgment years. Six months after the stipulated judgment, wife brought a motion to modify the stipulated spousal support award. The wife continued to be self-employed, and the husband continued his career in law enforcement. A decision was issued on the existence of a change of circumstances, the request to modify the stipulated support, and attorney fees.

- **Relocation/ Custody & Visitation Trial:** A divorced couple with extensive litigation regarding child custody and visitation of their two children. Mother moved and renewed her relocation request and modification of the custody and visitation orders. Mother was pro per and Father was represented. While the trial was pending, Mother filed eight additional motions relating to the children. The couple had parallel child support litigation. The seven day trial included 20 witnesses. A decision was rendered that included an extremely customized, detailed, color coded calendar, parenting schedule and orders.
- **Dissolution With Spousal Support And Property Division Trial:** A 16 year marriage with the only unique issue being Wife's request for the imputation of wage income to husband, a 61-year-old 100% disabled veteran, who quit his job at the Veterans Administration.
- **Domestic Violence/Custody & Visitation:** A multi-day trial regarding two children, involving evidence of domestic violence, rehabilitation, and Family Code section 3044. A Statement of Decision was issued, addressing the 3044 presumption, along with a parenting plan.