



## HON. CRAIG D. KARLAN (RET.)

Mediator, Arbitrator, Referee

Available Statewide



***“Every lawsuit is a legal riddle, wrapped in a financial mystery, inside an emotional enigma.”***  
- Judge Craig D. Karlan

Hon. Craig D. Karlan (Ret.) is a trial lawyer’s judge; he is an invaluable asset to trial lawyers, due to his impassioned commitment to studying and mastering every aspect of a jury trial over the past 32 years. Judge Karlan’s expertise is evidenced by a track record of trying countless cases to verdict, both as a litigator and as a judge, in addition to guest lectures he has presented to influential associations including the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles, the Beverly Hills Bar Association, and the Santa Monica Bar Association on topics such as Opening Statements, Closing Arguments, Cross-Examination, and Expert Witnesses.

Judge Karlan’s passion for jury trials enables him to be an exceptionally effective settlement officer. Having served as a judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court, West District, for over 20 years, he approaches all cases with the knowledge and experience gained from presiding over thousands of general jurisdiction civil matters of every imaginable variety, from filing to trial to post-judgment motions. He can quickly gauge the value of a given case, and he has heard and ruled upon hundreds of attorney fee motions, allowing him to ascertain reasonable fees and costs through verdict and even collection.

Judge Karlan’s 20-year judicial career has been defined by exceptional service at the Santa Monica Courthouse. During his 14 years as an Independent Calendar courtroom judge, he handled as many as 730 cases at a given time with unwavering accuracy and efficiency. In addition, he served as the West District Probate Judge for eight years, demonstrating extraordinary acumen while navigating complicated high-net-worth probate cases involving complex financial issues and emotionally charged familial dynamics. After presiding over his first Mandatory Settlement Conference in 2003, Judge Karlan has applied his commitment to facilitating fair and reasonable outcomes to the hundreds of settlement conferences he has handled since then in nearly every type of civil action, including probate and family law. Judge Karlan’s strength as a settlement officer has directly resulted in the resolution of not only his own cases, but also those of his bench colleagues.

In addition to his love for jury trials, Judge Karlan is a lifelong student of game theory and negotiation tactics, further enhancing his ability to settle disputes. While studying at Harvard Law School and as an undergraduate at Yale University, he had the opportunity to learn from esteemed academic luminaries including Professors Thomas Schelling (Nobel Prize winner for having “enhanced our understanding of conflict and cooperation through game-theory analysis”), James Sebenius (*Wise Choices*), Barry Nalebuff (*Thinking Strategically*), and Douglas Rae, amongst other distinguished lecturers in this area.

Drawing upon a well-rounded academic foundation in negotiation, strategy, and dispute resolution, Judge Karlan has a unique perspective for resolving litigation. He is extremely familiar with Professor Roger Fisher and his acclaimed book *Getting to Yes*. As a testament to this fact, Judge Karlan successfully negotiated against students of Professor Fisher in the Williston Negotiation Competition as a 1L at Harvard Law School, demonstrating both tenacity and skill when it comes to negotiating from positions of strength or weakness. Simply put, Judge Karlan’s extensive trial experience, coupled with his innate understanding of game theory and negotiation strategy, allow him to quickly ascertain each case’s “BATNA” - Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement.

Judge Karlan is committed to helping you settle your matter.

### EDUCATION

Harvard Law School, <i>Juris Doctorate</i>	1991
Yale University, <i>Bachelor of Arts, Phi Beta Kappa, Summa Cum Laude</i>	1988
London School of Economics, <i>International Relations</i>	1986 - 1987

## LEGAL EXPERIENCE

### **Judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court, County of Los Angeles** **2003 - 2023**

Last Assignment: Civil, I/C Court (Law and Motion/Trials/MSCs), 2009-2023  
Previous Assignments: Family Law, Probate, Limited Civil, and Criminal, 2003-2011

Former Committee Assignments: Trial Jurors Committee; Research Attorney/Law Clerk Committee; Security Committee; Grand Jury Committee; Executive Committee, West District Representative; Special Events Committee; Temporary Judge Committee, Vice Chair; Driving Under the Influence Committee, Vice Chair; Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee

### **Deputy District Attorney, County of Los Angeles** **1991 - 2002**

Prosecuted: Murder, Domestic Violence, Robbery, Gang, Hate Crimes, Burglary, Grand Theft, Rape, Tax Fraud, Tax Evasion, Money Laundering, Securities Fraud and Insurance Fraud

Lectured on White-Collar Crime within the District Attorney's office and on Money Laundering for the California District Attorneys' Association.

## TEACHING

### **Adjunct Professor, Pepperdine University School of Law** **2002 - 2012**

Courses Taught: "White Collar Crime: Prosecution and Defense," and "Criminal Trial Preparation." Topics included mail fraud, wire fraud, grand theft, tax fraud, tax evasion, securities fraud, money laundering, structuring, conspiracy, murder for financial gain and RICO, as well as all aspects of trial preparation.

## AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

- Business and Commercial Contracts
- Civil Rights
- Construction Defect
- Elder Abuse
- Entertainment
- Habitability
- Insurance
- Intellectual Property
- Landlord-Tenant
- Medical Malpractice
- Partner/Member Disputes
- Personal Injury
- Probate, Estates & Trusts
- Product Liability
- Professional Liability
- Property and Neighbor Disputes
- Real Estate
- Wrongful Death

## PROBATE EXPERIENCE

- Will Contests
- Trust Contests
- Breach of Fiduciary Duty
- Elder Abuse
- Real Property Transfers
- Contested Conservatorships
- Contested Guardianships

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

AYSO, Volunteer Coach/Referee	2004, 2013-2015, 2019
Constitutional Rights Foundation, Volunteer Instructor	2004-2005
4-H/South Youth Services, Volunteer Instructor	2005
Project LEAD (District Attorney's Office), Volunteer Instructor	1996, 2001-2003

## PERSONAL

Interests include golf, fitness, writing, movies, cooking, and especially Labradors.