



## HON. STEVEN J. KLEIFIELD (RET.)

Mediator · Arbitrator · Referee



Hon. Steven J. Kleifield (Ret.) is a distinguished public servant and esteemed legal professional admired for his intellect, integrity, and unwavering commitment to justice. With 42 years of experience working in the Los Angeles Superior Court, including 20 years as a Superior Court Judge and 22 years in private practice, Judge Kleifield has vast experience in handling a wide range of civil cases. Known for his fairness and patience, he is well-respected by attorneys representing both plaintiffs and defendants. Judge Kleifield has a deep understanding of the challenges faced by civil litigants and their attorneys. He is dedicated to assisting the Superior Court, litigants, and attorneys in the resolution of civil cases.

Judge Kleifield earned his B.A. degree from Washington University (St. Louis) in 1975 and his J.D. from the National Law Center at George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C. in 1980.

Upon completing his legal education, Judge Kleifield entered into civil private practice, working in the trial and appellate courts. As an attorney, Judge Kleifield participated in every aspect of trial practice - trials, pleadings, motions, discovery, and appeals. His keen legal mind and meticulous attention to detail quickly earned him recognition within the legal community. He argued twice before the California Supreme Court. Judge Kleifield remained in private practice for 22 years until his appointment to the bench in 2002.

As a Judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court, Judge Kleifield first served in the Criminal Division. During this time, he presided over 85 criminal trials that resulted in verdicts and approximately 2,000 preliminary hearings. He was later transferred to the Civil Division, beginning with a one-year appointment as a limited civil trial court judge. Over the course of that year, he presided over 25 jury trials and numerous bench trials. Following a brief stint in the Limited Civil Master Calendar courtroom, he was then appointed to a general civil court at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse.

For nine years, Judge Kleifield presided over an Independent Calendar court, tackling a diverse range of civil cases, including employment, personal injury, business and partnership disputes, unlawful detainer and habitability, lemon law, medical and other professional malpractice, and real estate, among others. In addition, he served for two years in the Complex Department as the Coordination Judge for asbestos-related cases in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties.

Throughout his judicial career, Judge Kleifield served on a number of committees, the most memorable being the Civil Legislation Committee of the California Judges Association, which reviews and proposes legislation and communicates with the State legislature. In this capacity, he played an important role in shaping public policy and ensuring the fair and equitable administration of justice. As an attorney, he served on the board of the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles for ten years and on the board of the Los Angeles County Bar Association for four years. He was a member of the amicus curiae committee of the Consumer Attorneys Association of California.

Judge Kleifield also participated in judicial outreach. He presided over high school mock trials sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation. He also started Teen Court programs at Fairfax High School and Los Angeles High School. During his 12 years volunteering his time to these programs, he presided over trials where high school students sat as jurors in misdemeanor cases involving other students. Judge Kleifield is also a regular contributor to legal publications and has written articles for the *Advocate* and the *Los Angeles Daily Journal*.

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### JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

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Civil Independent Calendar Court, 2011-2016, 2018-2023

- Handled unlimited jurisdiction cases assigned directly to the department, including employment, personal injury, business and partnership disputes, unlawful detainer and habitability, lemon law,

medical and other professional malpractice, and real estate, among others. Handled cases from beginning to end, including case management conferences, discovery, motions, bench trials, jury trials, post-trial motions, and a variety of other tasks.

#### Asbestos Coordination Judge, 2016-2018

- As part of the Complex Civil department, handled asbestos cases for Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties. Tasks included case management for hundreds of cases and pre-trial motions, including a heavy calendar of summary judgment motions and jurisdictional and venue motions.

#### Limited Civil Court, 2009-2011

- Presided over both court and jury trials, including over 25 jury trials to verdict. Ran master calendar department for six months before assignment to general civil.

#### Criminal Court, 2002-2009

- Conducted 85 jury trials and approximately 2,000 preliminary hearings, as well as various motions, including suppression motions.

#### Court-Related Activities:

- Member of various Los Angeles Superior Court committees, including executive, technology, civil and small claims, community outreach, rules, and trial jurors.
- California Judges Association: member of civil legislation committee; lecturer at Judges College.
- Presided over Teen Court, where high school students sit as jurors in misdemeanor cases involving other students; started programs at Fairfax High School and Los Angeles High School.
- Presided over high school mock trials sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation.

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### LAW PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

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Partner - Gordon, Edelstein, Krepack, Grant, Felton & Goldstein, LLP, 1989-2002

Associate - Schlifkin and Papell, 1980-1989

- Practiced in civil courts throughout Southern California, primarily representing plaintiffs.
- Licensed and practiced in Los Angeles and other Superior Courts, including Orange, San Diego, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino and Riverside; Second and Fourth District Courts of Appeal; California Supreme Court; U.S. District Court, Central District; 9th Circuit Court of Appeals; United States Supreme Court.

#### Law-Related Activities as Attorney:

- Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles (CAALA), Board of Governors for ten years, achieving emeritus status. Taught at numerous CAALA Seminars.
- Board of Governors, Los Angeles County Bar Association for four years.
- Consumer Attorneys of California, Amicus Curiae Committee.
- Conducted 50 arbitrations under the Los Angeles Superior Court's ADR program.
- Coached high school students for mock trials for Constitutional Rights Foundation.

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### PUBLICATIONS

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- Author, "Do You Want the Judge to Read Your Papers?", *Advocate*
- Author, "Effective Courtroom Lawyering: Don't Annoy the Judge!", *Advocate*
- Author, "Examinations Under Evidence Code Section 776 - Don't Call the Defendant Just Because You Can...", *Advocate*
- Author, "Unlawful Detainer Trials", *Los Angeles Daily Journal*

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### AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

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| • Asbestos                       | • Medical Malpractice    |
| • Breach of Contract/Fraud       | • Personal Injury        |
| • Employment                     | • Products Liability     |
| • Insurance Coverage & Bad Faith | • Professional Liability |
| • Landlord / Tenant              | • UM/UIM                 |
| • Legal Malpractice              |                          |