



HON. DAVID SOTELO (RET.)

Mediator, Arbitrator, Referee



Hon. David Sotelo (Ret.) is a seasoned decision maker with over three decades of applied skills, knowledge and real-world legal experience as a Superior Court Judge, Court Commissioner, and Deputy District Attorney. A thoughtful and committed advocate of fairness and legal integrity, his expertise covers a very broad range of civil and criminal matters.

Judge Sotelo most recently served in the Stanley Mosk courthouse of the Los Angeles Superior Court, where he managed a large Unlimited Civil Independent Calendar (IC) court and presided over jury and bench trials, motions, discovery hearings (formal and informal), and settlement conferences. The expansive case inventory included personal injury, elder abuse, fraud, civil rights, medical, legal, and professional malpractice, employment, landlord-tenant, habitability, insurance bad faith, real property, sexual abuse (clergy, public official and private), intra-religious entity/non-profit corporations, intellectual property, and equity.

Judge Sotelo's prior civil court experience includes serving as co-Judge of the Court's Limited Jurisdiction Master Calendar Court, managing a calendar of over 60,000 cases. He then moved into one of the Court's Unlimited Jurisdiction Personal Injury Pre-Trial Hub Courts where he was responsible for over 3,000 pending cases, conducting hundreds of formal and informal discovery conferences and mediating settlements.

As an attorney, Judge Sotelo practiced criminal law, first as a white-collar criminal defense attorney, and later as a Los Angeles County Deputy District Attorney where he prosecuted countless jury trials. After the Rodney King Beating and Simi Valley trial, he was recruited into the District Attorney's Special Investigations Division where he investigated and prosecuted police abuse and public official misconduct cases.

Prior to attending law school, Judge Sotelo worked as a full-time waiter/food server in Sausalito and San Francisco. During this time, he was elected as the on-the-job Shop Steward by more than 300 fellow employees and union members of AFL-CIO, Hotel, Bartenders, and Culinary Workers Union, Local 2. Later, as an older student with a family of four, Judge Sotelo entered law school with the intention of specializing in labor law.

Judge Sotelo's lifelong commitment to community service includes serving as a member of the Board of Directors for the Mexican American Bar Foundation, member and President of the East Los Angeles Rotary Club, member of the Board of Directors of Beverly Hospital, and a member of the UCLA Law School Board of Advisors. Additionally, he co-founded and instructed the SHADES (Stop Hate and Delinquency by Empowering Students) outreach program at the Los Angeles Museum of Tolerance and continues to contribute as a volunteer Teen Court Judge.

Judge Sotelo was presented with the Benjamin Aranda Judge of the Year award by the Mexican American Bar Association. Additionally, he has been honored with both the UCLA and UCLA School of Law Latino Alumni of the Year awards. In 2013, Judge Sotelo received the University of California, Santa Cruz, Social Sciences Alumni of the Year Award.

Born in East Los Angeles and raised in San Francisco's Mission and Excelsior neighborhoods, Judge Sotelo speaks Spanish fluently.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Personal Injury
- Civil Rights / Police Misconduct
- Business / Breach of Contract
- Professional Liability (Legal, Medical)
- Product Liability / Consumer Protection
- Employment / Wrongful Termination

JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

Assigned Judge, Temporary Assigned Judges Program (TAJP) **2023**
Assigned by the Chief Justice to hear Civil, Probate, and Criminal matters in all California counties.

Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court **2002-2023**
Civil Assignments, Stanley Mosk Courthouse:
General Jurisdiction Independent Calendar (IC) Court, 2015-2023
General Jurisdiction Pre-Trial Personal Injury Hub Court, 2014
Limited Civil Master Calendar Hub, 2013
Criminal Assignments:
All-Purpose Felony Criminal Trial Calendar, Compton Courthouse, 2005-2012
Misdemeanor Trial Calendar, Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center, 2004
Supervising Judge and Site Judge, Metropolitan Courthouse, 2002-2003

Court Commissioner, Los Angeles Superior Court **2000-2002**
Court Commissioner, East Los Angeles Municipal Court **1994-2000**
Elected and Appointed by the Judges of the Court.
Presided over all East Los Angeles District preliminary hearings, early disposition program (EDP) and felony arraignments.
Misdemeanor criminal pretrial, motions, jury trial and post-conviction probation.
Limited civil, personal injury and unlawful detainer calendars. Jury and bench trials.
Weekend Probable Cause and Bail Deviation Hearings.
Drug Court Judge: Created and presided over Felony Drug Court Program.

PRIOR LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Deputy District Attorney, County of Los Angeles **1988-1994**
In addition to hundreds of felony preliminary hearings, motions, and misdemeanor matters, prosecuted well over 80 criminal jury trials, including 20 homicides.

Special Investigations Prosecutor: Post-Rodney King, investigated and prosecuted public official criminal conduct, including prosecution of 8 cases involving police misconduct in multiple county agencies for the use of excessive force.

Attorney, Law Offices of Steven David Miller **1986-1988**
White collar Federal contracts fraud and criminal defense matters (General Dynamics and Toshiba).

EDUCATION

Juris Doctor, University of California Los Angeles School of Law 1986
Bachelor of Arts in Politics, University of California, Santa Cruz, Merrill College 1983

AWARDS AND HONORS

UC Santa Cruz Distinguished Social Sciences Alumni Award 2013
Benjamin Aranda Award for Judicial Excellence, Mexican American Bar Association 2007
Alumnus of the Year, UCLA Latino Alumni Association 2005
Latino Alumnus of the Year, UCLA School of Law 2003

PUBLIC SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Los Angeles Superior Court, Teen/Peer Court Volunteer	2002-Present
Judge, Redondo Union High School, Redondo Beach, 2022-Present	
Judge, Carson High School, Carson, 2009-2020	
Judge, Manual Arts High School, Los Angeles, 2002-2008	
Mexican American Bar Association (MABA)	1986-Present
SHADES Program (Stop Hate and Delinquency by Empowering Students)	1998-2021
Mexican American Bar Foundation (MABF), Board Member	1996-2016
UCLA School of Law, Board of Advisors	2005-2007
UCLA Chancellor's Search Committee for Law School Dean	2003-2004
American Inns of Court, Judicial Member	2009-2012
Benjamin Aranda Chapter, 2011-2012	
Judge William J. Rea Chapter, 2006-2008	
Rotary Club, East Los Angeles (President, 1999)	1995-2002
Beverly Community Hospital, Board Member	1994-2002

PERSONAL

Judge Sotelo's interests include gardening, cooking, and golf.