



## **HON. ROGER T. BENITEZ (RET.)**

**Mediator • Arbitrator • Referee**



Hon. Roger T. Benitez (Ret.) joins ADR Services, Inc. after more than four decades at the center of complex civil litigation as a federal district judge, magistrate judge, state court judge, and trial lawyer. Over the course of his career, Judge Benitez has presided over some of the most complex disputes in federal court, including multidistrict litigation (MDL), high-stakes class actions, patent and intellectual property cases, securities disputes, antitrust matters, and large commercial controversies.

From 2004 to 2026, Judge Benitez served as a United States District Judge for the Southern District of California, where he managed a docket that routinely included complex commercial and institutional litigation. During that time, he presided over patent and intellectual property disputes, securities and antitrust actions, employment and wage-and-hour cases, civil rights litigation, product liability matters, and large class actions, including the largest class action settlement in the history of the Southern District of California. His experience spans both jury and bench trials as well as the management of highly technical, document-intensive litigation.

Judge Benitez was appointed by the Chief Justice of the United States to serve on the United States Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation, where he helped oversee the coordination of complex federal litigation nationwide. He also served as a transferee judge in four multidistrict litigation (MDL) cases, involving securities claims, wage-and-hour disputes, consumer privacy and data breach litigation, and sales practices allegations.

Throughout his judicial career, Judge Benitez played a central role in resolving disputes before trial. He has conducted hundreds of settlement conferences and early neutral evaluations, and has presided over countless cases that ultimately resolved through negotiation under his supervision. His approach is pragmatic and direct: he identifies the issues that truly matter to the parties and, when helpful, provides an experienced and candid evaluation that allows litigants to realistically assess risk and reach resolution.

Before his appointment as a United States District Judge, Judge Benitez served as a United States Magistrate Judge and previously as a Judge of the Superior Court of California, where he was elected Presiding Judge of the Appellate Division. Earlier in his career, he spent nearly twenty years as a litigation attorney and shareholder at Heim Benitez & Driskill, representing both plaintiffs and defendants in commercial litigation, real estate disputes, probate litigation, and personal injury matters.

Judge Benitez is widely recognized for his willingness to tackle difficult legal issues and provide clear, decisive rulings when the circumstances require it. His ability to navigate complex legal and factual disputes—combined with decades of experience managing sophisticated litigation—makes him particularly well suited to serve as a mediator, arbitrator, or special master in high-stakes cases.

## AREAS OF FOCUS

Judge Benitez handles a wide range of civil matters, with particular depth in:

- Multidistrict Litigation (MDL)
- Securities and Shareholder Disputes
- Antitrust and Competition Law
- Patent and Intellectual Property
- Complex Commercial Litigation
- Class Actions
- Employment and Wage & Hour
- Consumer Privacy and Data Breach
- Product Liability
- Real Estate and Real Property

## JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

### **United States District Court, Southern District of California**

United States District Judge, 2004–2026

- Member, United States Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation
- Transferee Judge in four MDL cases
- Patent Pilot Project Judge
- Presided over complex class actions, securities disputes, antitrust litigation, and intellectual property trials

### **United States District Court, Southern District of California**

United States Magistrate Judge, 2001–2004

### **Superior Court of California, County of Imperial**

Judge, 1997–2001

- Presiding Judge, Appellate Division (1999–2001)

## PRIOR LEGAL PRACTICE

### **Heim Benitez & Driskill**

Attorney / Shareholder, 1979–1997

- Practice focused on commercial litigation, real estate and real property disputes, probate litigation, and personal injury (plaintiff and defense)

## NOTABLE APPELLATE CASES

As a lawyer, Judge Benitez participated as counsel in several California appellate cases that remain frequently cited authorities, including:

- *Valdez v. Smith*, 166 Cal. App. 3d 725 (1985)

- *A & M Produce Co. v. FMC Corp.*, 135 Cal. App. 3d 473 (1982)
- *Camacho v. You*, 95 Cal. App. 3d 161 (1979)

These decisions helped shape California law on issues including unconscionability and wrongful death claims and continue to be referenced in legal treatises and appellate opinions.

#### **ADR TRAINING**

- Federal Judicial Center & Pepperdine Mediation Training Program, Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution, August 2023

#### **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- United States Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation
- Judicial Conference Committee on Financial Disclosure
- Ninth Circuit Education Committee
- Ninth Circuit State/Federal Judicial Council
- Thomas Jefferson School of Law – Board of Trustees
- California Continuing Education of the Bar – Contributor
- Adjunct Professor, Imperial Valley College