



HON. JAMES "REG" REILLY (RET.)

Mediator • Arbitrator • Referee



A Settlement-Focused Neutral with Judicial Authority and Real-World Litigation Depth

Hon. James "Reg" Reilly (Ret.) built his career on understanding how cases are actually won, lost, and most importantly, resolved. Over four decades as a civil litigator, law firm leader, and judge, he developed a practical, disciplined approach to dispute resolution that reflects a simple reality: most cases do not need a verdict; they need a path to settlement.

Before taking the bench, Judge Reilly spent over 24 years as a partner at Gordon, Rees, Scully & Mansukhani, including serving as Managing Partner of the firm's San Francisco office, where he oversaw more than 140 attorneys. His practice focused primarily on complex business disputes and high-exposure product liability matters, including pharmaceutical and medical device litigation, and he served as coordinating counsel in nationwide, multi-party proceedings. That experience gave him a working understanding of how litigation strategy, cost pressure, and risk tolerance shape decision-making on both sides of the table.

That perspective deepened when he was appointed to the Alameda County Superior Court, where he would ultimately serve not just as a trial judge, but as a central figure in the court's civil and settlement infrastructure. In his role as Supervising Judge of the 22 departments in the Civil Division, he became familiar with each of the trial courts, their calendars, trials and verdicts. And as Supervising Judge of the Settlement Department, Judge Reilly presided over hundreds of mandatory settlement conferences, working through everything from business disputes and personal injury matters to professional negligence and complex, multi-party cases. Through this significant volume, he experienced the full spectrum of negotiation dynamics, from straightforward resolutions to deeply entrenched positions, and gained understanding of how to move each forward.

His approach to mediation reflects that experience. He is not interested in posturing or performative neutrality. Instead, by listening closely to the parties and counsel, he focuses on momentum, keeping negotiations moving, forcing clarity about risk, and helping parties make informed decisions. He consistently brings discussions back to two variables that drive resolution: the financial realities of continuing litigation and the inherent uncertainty of what will actually happen at trial. By grounding negotiations in these realities, he helps parties move away from rigid positions and toward practical outcomes.

Judge Reilly's ability to do this is rooted in preparation and persistence. He is known for thoroughly reviewing submissions, engaging directly with counsel and parties, and identifying the "pressure points" that matter in a case whether legal, factual, or emotional. When negotiations stall, he drills down into the reasons, reframes the issues, and, when appropriate, introduces creative solutions such as

mediator's proposals to bridge the gap. Attorneys who have worked with him describe him as thoughtful, thorough, and serious about resolution, but also professional and civil, someone who can push a case forward without escalating conflict.

His credibility as a neutral is reinforced by the breadth of his underlying experience. Over the course of his career, he has handled matters involving contract disputes, partnership dissolutions, fraud and misrepresentation, personal injury, public entity liability, and professional negligence, as well as nationally coordinated product liability cases involving pharmaceuticals and medical devices. He has also been recognized for his work on the bench, including being named Trial Judge of the Year by the Alameda Contra Costa Trial Lawyers Association.

What ultimately distinguishes Judge Reilly is not just the scope of his experience, but his application of that experience. He understands that parties often reach mediation at a point of fatigue—financially, emotionally, and strategically—and that resolution requires more than legal analysis. It requires someone who can listen, assess, and steadily guide the conversation toward closure. Judge Reilly offers a combination of judicial authority, litigation insight, and a results-oriented approach that is built to get cases resolved. By his own account, very few cases truly need to go to trial, and his work as a neutral is driven by a clear objective: to help parties reach a resolution that is efficient, informed, and ultimately fair.

WHY JUDGE REILLY

Judge Reilly's mediation style is pragmatic and momentum-driven:

- Keeps negotiations forward-moving and outcome-focused
- Ensures each party understands the strengths, weaknesses, and risks of their case
- Emphasizes two core trial risks:
 - Financial exposure (costs of litigation and potential outcomes)
 - Evidentiary uncertainty (unpredictability of witnesses and admissibility)
- Uses targeted issue-framing and mediator's proposals when appropriate to break impasse

He is widely described as a patient listener, highly prepared, and persistent in achieving resolution.

JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

Superior Court of California, County of Alameda, Judge (2018 – 2026)

- Supervising Judge, Settlement Department (2024–2026)
 - Presided over mandatory settlement conferences in high-volume civil matters
 - Known for driving resolution in complex, multi-party disputes
- Supervising Judge – Civil Division (2024–2025)
 - Oversaw 22 civil departments, including complex litigation, trial courts, and settlement programs
 - Managed operations across diverse case types, from business disputes to unlawful detainers
- Chair, Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee
 - Led court-wide ADR strategy and settlement initiatives

- Presided over hundreds of settlement conferences and trials, including:
 - Business and contract disputes
 - Personal injury and wrongful death
 - Employment, discrimination and harassment matters
 - Medical and legal malpractice and public entity liability
 - Disputes involving real property

LEGAL CAREER

Gordon, Rees, Scully & Mansukhani, LLP, Former Managing Partner of San Francisco Office (1994 – 2018)

- Led a 140+ attorney office
- Supervising trial lawyer in complex commercial and product liability litigation
- Served as national and regional coordinating counsel in major multi-district and coordinated proceedings
- Extensive experience in:
 - Business disputes and partnership conflicts
 - Trade secret litigation
 - Personal injury litigation
 - Pharmaceutical and medical device product liability litigation

Glynn, Cella & Lange (1993)

Crosby, Heafey Roach & May (1990 to 1992)

Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro (1986 to 1990)

- Associate Attorney
- Experience in antitrust, securities fraud, general commercial matters, theft of trade secrets, and product liability

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Business Litigation
- Complex Litigation
- Elder Abuse
- Employment Litigation
- Landlord-Tenant Litigation
- Personal Injury
- Product Liability
- Professional Malpractice
- Real Property

NOTABLE EXPERIENCE

- Trial Judge of the Year (2026) – Alameda Contra Costa Trial Lawyers Association
- Oversaw numerous high-stakes settlement conferences as supervising settlement judge
- Handled nationally and regionally coordinated product liability cases involving:
 - Breast implants

- Fen-phen (diet drugs)
- Numerous pharmaceutical products, including PPA, amiodarone, metoclopramide
- Achieved one of the Daily Journal's Top 10 Defense Verdicts (2014) in an elder abuse case

EDUCATION

University of San Francisco School of Law, J.D., 1986

- Editor-in-Chief, *USF Law Review*
- Harold J. Haley Award for Scholarship and Character

University of California, Berkeley, B.A., Economics, 1976

MILITARY SERVICE

United States Navy Officer (1976 – 1983)

- Served in the Third and Seventh Fleets
- Surface Warfare Officer
- Engineering Officer of the Watch

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS & SERVICE

- California Judges Association (Executive Board, Committees)
- Alameda County and American Bar Associations
- Defense Research Institute
- International Association of Defense Counsel
- Food and Drug Law Institute