



HON. VALERIE SALKIN (RET.)

Mediator | Los Angeles



After more than three decades in the legal profession, including 16 years on the Los Angeles County Superior Court, nine years presiding over civil matters, and more than 100 jury trials as a prosecutor, Hon. Valerie Salkin (Ret.) brings extensive experience in litigation, trial risk, judicial decision-making, and case management to her work as a mediator.

Judge Salkin was elected to the Los Angeles County Superior Court in 2010 and subsequently received an interim appointment from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, allowing her to take the bench immediately. She spent her first seven years presiding over criminal matters before transitioning to the civil bench. For approximately nine years, she handled civil litigation in Van Nuys, including four years as a civil trial judge and five years presiding over an unlimited-jurisdiction Independent Calendar court in Department U. She also served as a settlement judge for nearly a year and conducted more than 150 Mandatory Settlement Conferences.

Her civil experience spans business and commercial disputes, contract claims, employment matters, personal injury and premises liability, consumer litigation, medical malpractice, automobile cases, collections, and other unlimited civil matters. In her Independent Calendar assignment, Judge Salkin managed an inventory exceeding 1,000 active cases while addressing law and motion, discovery disputes, case management proceedings, court and jury trials, and post-trial matters.

At one point, Judge Salkin's Independent Calendar inventory reached approximately 1,250 active cases. She worked that inventory down to approximately 1,067 cases while continuing to manage the daily demands of a high-volume civil courtroom. That experience gave her a practical perspective on why litigation becomes stuck, which disputes genuinely matter, and what can move cases forward. Most importantly, Judge Salkin emphasizes direct communication as a tool for resolving conflict.

Before joining the bench, Judge Salkin spent 13 years as a Deputy District Attorney with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office and tried more than 100 criminal cases to jury verdict as lead counsel. Her final years as a prosecutor were spent in the Hardcore Gang Unit handling gang murder prosecutions and conducting intensive factual investigations involving witnesses, physical evidence, crime scenes, autopsies, and law-enforcement investigations.

Her jury trial background gives Judge Salkin a grounded perspective on litigation risk. She understands the difference between an argument that appears persuasive on paper and one that is likely to resonate with a judge or jury. As a judge, she has emphasized the importance of preparation, concise advocacy, credibility, and paying close attention to how jurors respond to evidence and questioning.

Judge Salkin brings a practical, prepared, and direct approach to dispute resolution. She focuses on identifying the issues that are truly driving the dispute, cutting through unnecessary complexity, and helping parties realistically assess the strengths, weaknesses, and risks of their positions. She places a premium on meaningful communication and practical problem-solving, particularly when litigation positions have become entrenched. Drawing on years of experience managing a substantial civil docket,

she understands the financial and practical costs of prolonged litigation and works with counsel and parties to identify productive paths toward resolution.

For parties and counsel seeking a mediator with substantial civil judicial experience, extensive jury-trial experience, and a direct approach to case evaluation, Judge Salkin offers the perspective of someone who has spent decades assessing evidence, managing conflict, and identifying the issues that determine whether a case proceeds to trial or moves toward resolution.

AREAS OF EXPERIENCE

- Business/Contract
- Employment
- Insurance
- Landlord/Tenant
- Medical Malpractice
- Personal Injury
- Real estate

JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

Judge of the Superior Court, Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 2010-2026

- Civil judicial experience included approximately nine years in Van Nuys, including four years as a civil trial judge followed by five years presiding over an unlimited-jurisdiction Independent Calendar court.
- Civil assignments encompassed a broad range of matters, including commercial and contract disputes, tort and personal injury matters, employment cases, consumer matters, collections, and other unlimited civil litigation.
- Managed a high-volume civil docket; issued tentative rulings in advance of hearings and presided over jury trials, law and motion matters, discovery disputes, case management conferences, and post-trial proceedings.

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Deputy District Attorney, Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, 1997-2010

- Served as a prosecutor for 13 years and tried more than 100 criminal cases to jury verdict as lead counsel.
- Spent the final three years in the Hardcore Gang Unit, where the caseload consisted of gang murder prosecutions.
- Conducted intensive case investigation, including crime-scene visits, witness interviews, autopsy attendance, and coordination with law-enforcement investigations.
- Named Deputy District Attorney of the Month in September 2008 for the successful prosecution of a five-defendant case involving two separate homicides. The jury trial lasted nearly two months.

Deputy Legal Counsel, Office of Brad Sherman, California State Board of Equalization, 1993-1997

- Served as deputy legal counsel to Brad Sherman, then a member of the California State Board of Equalization.

Staff Assistant, U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce | Office of Rep. John Dingell, 1988-1989

EDUCATION

- J.D., University of Southern California, Gould School of Law, 1992
- B.A. in Political Science and English, University of Michigan, 1988

HONORS & RECOGNITION

- Judge of the Year, San Fernando Valley Bar Association, 2026
- Inspiration Award, San Fernando Valley Bar Association, 2024
- District Attorney of the Month, Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, 2008
- Outstanding Prosecutor Award, Justice for Homicide Victims, 2006
- Gold Key Award, American Bar Association, 1992

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What types of cases does Judge Valerie Salkin handle as a neutral?

Judge Salkin's civil judicial experience includes business and commercial disputes, contract matters, employment and wrongful termination cases, personal injury and premises liability, consumer matters, automobile cases, collections, and other unlimited civil litigation. Her broad IC assignment required her to evaluate disputes across numerous substantive areas.

What makes Judge Salkin well suited to help resolve difficult civil cases?

Judge Salkin has spent years managing a civil calendar of more than 1,000 active cases and emphasized direct communication, efficient case management, and identifying the issues that actually require judicial intervention. She observed that most discovery disputes can be worked out when attorneys move beyond unproductive email exchanges and speak directly.

How much trial experience does Judge Salkin have?

Before taking the bench, Judge Salkin tried more than 100 criminal cases to jury verdict as lead counsel during 13 years as a Los Angeles County Deputy District Attorney. She later spent four years as a civil trial judge and has continued to preside over jury trials as an Independent Calendar judge.

How much civil judicial experience does Judge Salkin have?

Judge Salkin has approximately nine years of civil judicial experience in Van Nuys, including four years as a civil trial judge and five years presiding over an unlimited-jurisdiction Independent Calendar court.

What is Judge Salkin's approach to mediation?

Her approach reflects an emphasis on preparation, clarity, direct communication, and realistic assessment. She encourages attorneys to identify the essential facts and issues and prefers resolving disputes through meaningful communication.

Why consider Judge Valerie Salkin as a mediator in Los Angeles?

Judge Salkin combines extensive civil bench experience with more than 100 jury trials as an advocate and years of responsibility for a high-volume unlimited civil calendar. That combination provides substantial experience evaluating evidence, legal arguments, jury dynamics, litigation risk, and the practical consequences of continuing a case through trial.