

## Russell Bostrom

In the court system, lawyers don't choose which judges will preside over their cases. But they do have a say in the mediation process, and that suits Russell Bostrom just fine.

"In the case of private mediation, they're not stuck with me. They choose me. I like that," Bostrom, a mediator at Santa Ana-based Judicate West who specializes in personal injury cases, says.

Bostrom, a former Orange County Superior Court judge, has been a neutral at Judicate West for the past decade. In that period, he has arbitrated 2,500 cases and mediated 2,000.

Over the past two years, however, he has focused exclusively on mediation. He sees persistence as the crucial quality mediators should have.

"Often one or both parties will dig in a little bit, and you've got to persuade them," Bostrom, 60, says.

Bostrom served as a trial judge in Newport Beach from 1983 to 1990. Then he retired from the bench and taught at Western State University College of Law in Irvine until 1993, when he joined Judicate West and began to tackle the world of alternative dispute resolution.

One of Bostrom's most emotional cases involved a 9-year-old girl who was seriously injured in a car accident. In 1998, the car driven by the girl's mother vaulted off the road and into the California Aqueduct. The girl, who was trapped in the back seat of the submerged car for 45 minutes before being rescued, is now a quadriplegic.

Her mother sued the state of California, alleging the accident was caused by a defect in road design. The case settled two years later for \$10 million — Bostrom's largest settlement ever.

"As a good mediator, all I can tell you is



that both sides felt this was reasonable under the circumstances," Bostrom says.

"It was clearly a compromise in that sense. Obviously, it's satisfying that this little girl who suffered such a catastrophic injury will be well taken care of for the rest of her life," he adds.

Bostrom charges \$490 per hour, and Newport Beach partner Jeffrey Robinson, of Robinson, Calcagnie & Robinson, says he's worth every penny.

Robinson was the plaintiffs' attorney in the case involving the 9-year-old girl.

"He's willing to go the extra mile to ensure the case settles, whether that means staying until 10 at night or whether it means calling you four more times the following week to do follow-up," Robinson says.

"The bottom line is, you get your money's worth," he adds.

— Toni Vranjes