

# VERDICTS & SETTLEMENTS

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## The Right Move

*Lifelong plaintiffs' warrior Amy Solomon has proven herself as a neutral, lawyers say*

By **Gina Kim**  
Daily Journal Staff Writer

Plaintiffs' and defense attorneys agree that neutral Amy F. Solomon made the right move joining Judicate West after three decades with Girardi Keese.

Solomon has been a mediator for just 15 months, but lawyers say the lifelong warrior for plaintiffs has already proven herself as a deft neutral, thanks to her professionalism, practicality and decades of experience as a trial lawyer.

Solomon said she's enjoyed her new job immensely and the past year has been an amazing ride.

"I've been building a practice that exceeded my expectations," she said. "I'm loving it more than I thought I would."

"Yes, she made the right move because not only did she give us another option as a great neutral but I don't have to defend my cases against her anymore," joked Guy Gruppie, senior partner at Murchison & Cumming. Gruppie, who primarily specializes in defense work, praised Solomon for treating each case with the utmost importance.

"I've seen a trend in the last few years when you prepare a great brief and you expect the neutral to address the issues in it right away only to find out they haven't read any of it," Gruppie said. "But Amy? By



Daily Journal photo

then she's read it about three times, circled the good parts, put stars on the bad parts, looked at all the cases you cite and she's ready to go."

Gruppie said his go-to neutral for years was John K. (Jack) Trotter of JAMS, and since his retirement, Gruppie said he's felt almost an emptiness, but Solomon's services have helped fill that void.

"She's a good listener, she's smart, experienced and I love the fact she understands the weaknesses and strong points of both plaintiff and defense cases," said Gruppie. "She's done a great job for a number of our cases already even

though she hasn't been a neutral for that long."

Solomon joined Judicate West's Los Angeles office on July 1, 2019 after putting in 33 years with Girardi Keese. She was widely regarded as one of the top plaintiffs' lawyers for decades. Solomon handles mediation and arbitration, overseeing disputes over real estate, personal injury, medical malpractice and product liability. Her arbitrations typically focus on underinsured and uninsured motor cases.

"When I look at my cases, it's like a chess game," she said. "I want people to think about strategies they want to

### Amy F. Solomon

Judicate West,  
Southern California

**Areas of specialty:**

professional malpractice, real estate, personal injury, wrongful death, premises liability, civil rights, general negligence, business, commercial contracts

implement, and I want to help polish that strategy before we can get into the ultimate end game."

Solomon advises attorneys to provide succinct, concise briefs

in advance of any meeting. No need for an entire opening statement; just a simple filing that outlines the main issues is enough, the neutral said. Solomon strongly suggests plaintiffs' attorneys advise opposing counsel of their demands at least three weeks prior to mediation, especially if there is an insurance company involved in a dispute. That way the adjuster can get whatever authority they feel is commensurate with the demand, she explained.

"Nothing bogs down a mediation like coming in on the day of with a demand that is in excess of what the adjuster's authority is on that day," she said.

Michael Alder, who has used Solomon's services for eight personal injury cases, advised lawyers: "Don't ever b.s. her. She knows what posturing is, and what is reality."

"You can use her very effec-

tively as a mediator if you're straightforward, because she's going to figure it out anyway," he said. "Feel comfortable trusting her advice. She's not going to oversell or undersell your case to the other side."

Cut to the chase, avoid fluffing up a narrative or weighing down briefs with colorful language, especially for personal injury cases, Alder advised.

Anthony Lanzone, partner at Lanzone Morgan LLP, advises lawyers to be straightforward with Solomon. Lanzone has known Solomon since he was a law student when he did a short stint with Girardi Keese. He has kept in touch ever since.

"She's a hard person not to know in the plaintiffs' community," he said. "She does a great job as a mediator. All of the trial experience translates to mediation in a way that I like to see: Let's get down to brass tacks. She's aware of all the

issues and how it plays out for both sides."

John McKeon, partner at Hardin, Kundla, McKeon & Poletto, said he was at first wary of using Solomon as a neutral, knowing her as a career plaintiffs' litigator. Those doubts were dissipated, and he said he was very impressed with her doggedness to reach a settlement.

"She is very patient," he said. "I've seen other neutrals give up in my experiences, but she soldiered on. I've been doing this for 20 years and have a large experience with facilitators all over the nation. Amy is top shelf."

Solomon said she utilizes all the good qualities she observed from mediators whose services she used as a lawyer. She always follows up with parties after meetings, never takes no for an answer, avoids using mediator's proposals when parties

are far apart, and uses bracketed bargaining when an impasse is reached, Solomon said.

"I want everyone to do the work to understand where this case needs to be. Let's approach things from a different angle," she explained. "I'm not going to let go until I'm absolutely satisfied my work here is done."

*Here are a list of attorneys who has used Solomon's services: Gary Dordick, Esq. of Dordick Law; Michael Alder, Esq. of Alder Law; Steve Glickman of Glickman & Glickman; Anthony C. Lanzone of Lanzone Morgan LLP; Greg Kirakosian; Guy Gruppie, Murchison & Cumming; Michael Marlatt of Thompson Colegate, Jeff Brau of Mc-Neill Tropp & Braun, John McKeon of Hardin, Kundla, McKeon & Poletto*

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