



Justice Cynthia G. Aaron, Ret.



Results Beyond DisputeSM

Justice Aaron brings extensive experience as a jurist in both the federal and state courts in San Diego. Most recently, she served as an associate justice on the California Court of Appeal for 20 years, resolving all types of cases filed in the Superior Court, including complex civil cases, probate disputes, and family law matters. Because of her extensive appellate experience, she is particularly sought after to conduct post-judgment mediations, assisting parties to assess the risks of pursuing an appeal and weighing those risks against the benefits of reaching a settlement. Justice Aaron has also served as an appellate consultant to advise appellate practitioners regarding their appellate strategy and has been retained to participate in moot court presentations. Prior to her appointment to the Court of Appeal, Justice Aaron served as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California for over eight years. She conducted hundreds of ENE conferences and settlement conferences in federal civil cases and was lauded by both the bar and the district court bench for her excellent interpersonal skills and exceptional ability to settle even the most contentious cases. The Commission on Judicial Nominees Evaluation described her as an "acclaimed magistrate judge" and a "gifted mediator." One colleague praised Justice Aaron as a "brilliant and hardworking jurist whose problem-solving skills are invaluable in resolving some of the most complex cases we hear." Justice Aaron applies those same problem-solving skills in assisting parties to arrive at a mutually agreeable resolution to their case, enabling them to avoid the expense, uncertainty, and stress of protracted litigation. She cultivates an atmosphere in which the parties feel free to fully express their concerns and know that they are truly being heard and understood. She is persistent in her approach, believing that reaching a settlement is always in the parties' best interests.

LEGAL CAREER & PRIOR EXPERIENCE

- Full-time Neutral, Judicate West (2023-Present)
- Associate Justice, California Court of Appeal, Fourth District, Division One (2003-2023); Served on the State-Federal Judicial Council and the Appellate Advisory Committee
- U.S. Magistrate Judge, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California (1994-2003)
- Founder, Aaron & Cortez; Specializing in Federal Criminal Defense and Civil Rights (1988-1994)
- Trial Attorney, Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc.; Specializing in Indigent Federal Criminal Defense (1984-1988)

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- J.D., Harvard Law School
- B.A., Stanford University
- Lawyers Club of San Diego, Sustaining Member
- Association of Business Trial Lawyers (ABTL), Former Board Member of the San Diego Chapter; Former Judicial Advisory Board Member
- Appellate Inn of Court, Master
- San Diego County Judges Association, Former President; Former Board of Directors
- San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program, Former Board Member
- University of San Diego School of Law and California Western School of Law, Former Adjunct Professor; Teaching trial practice

PRACTICE AREAS

Appellate; Business/Contractual; Civil Rights; Employment; Insurance; Personal Injury; Professional Malpractice (Legal and Medical); Real Estate

ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS

- AJC Judge Learned Hand Award Recipient
 - Presented at the Appellate Institute on the state of PAGA in the California Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court
 - Served on numerous panels for the appellate bar on various aspects of the appellate process
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HOBBIES & INTERESTS

Justice Aaron enjoys international travel, spending time with family, participating in her book club, seeing movies, and hiking with friends.

LOCATIONS

San Diego, Nationwide