



Hon. Laurie D. Zelon, Ret.



Results Beyond DisputeSM

Following more than 22 years on the bench, 18 of which were on the Court of Appeal, Justice Laurie Zelon has retired and is available to serve as a mediator, arbitrator, and private judge with a strong focus on arbitrations, private trials, special master assignments, neutral analysis, and appellate reviews. Justice Zelon brings a wealth of experience from her 23 years of practice prior to her judicial appointment, during which she represented corporations and governmental bodies in high-value disputes, including financial, governance, product liability, energy, geotechnical, and land use matters. On the appellate court, she addressed a comprehensive range of issues, authoring opinions across diverse areas of the law. Known for her meticulous attention to detail in preparation and decision-making, Justice Zelon is also respected for her approachability and commitment to mentorship. Her extensive background as a trial lawyer in high-stakes, large-scale commercial cases, combined with her judicial insights, makes her exceptionally equipped to handle complex matters. Justice Zelon described her approach to private dispute resolution stating, "My role as a neutral is to be an advocate for meaningful resolution by guiding individuals and organizations to understand their behavior and solve problems constructively. When people receive a hearing that they perceive as fair and conducted by a true neutral, they can resolve their dispute in a lasting manner."

LEGAL CAREER & PRIOR EXPERIENCE

- Full-time Neutral, Judicate West (2022-Present)
- Assigned Justice, California Court of Appeal, Orange County (2021-2022)
- Associate Justice, California Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Division Seven, Los Angeles (2003-2020)
- Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court, criminal and civil departments (2000-2003)
- Partner, Morrison & Foerster, complex commercial litigation (1991-2000)
- Partner and Associate, Hufstedler, Kaus & Ettinger, complex litigation involving scientific and technical issues, and large-scale commercial disputes (1983-1991)
- Associate, Beardsley, Hufstedler & Kemble, complex litigation involving scientific and technical issues, and large-scale commercial disputes (1977-1983)

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- J.D. Harvard Law School (1974-1977)
- B.A. Cornell University (1970-1974)
- California Women Lawyers Association, Member (1978-Present)
- Administrative Office of the Courts and Judicial Council Committees (1997-Present)
- Los Angeles County Bar Association, President President-Elect, Senior Vice President, Vice President, Board of Trustees (1977-Present)
- California Commission on Access to Justice, Chair, Member, Ex Officio (1997-Present)
- Women Lawyers' Association of Los Angeles, Member (1977-Present)
- American Bar Association, Member (1978-2009)
- Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, Board of Directors (1997-2000)
- Standing Committee on Discipline for the Central District of California, Member (1997-2000)
- Lawyers Committee, National Center for State Courts, Member (1988-1991)

PRACTICE AREAS

Appellate; Business Litigation; Environmental; Governmental; Life Sciences; Product Liability

ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS

- Panelist, LACBA CLE Program 'Appellate Courts Presents: Access To Justice On Appeal: The Special Challenges Of The Self-Represented Litigant' (May 2023)
- Publications include Jefferson's California Evidence Benchbook (2020), Equal

HOBBIES & INTERESTS

LOCATIONS

Access to Civil Justice: Pursuing Solutions Beyond the Legal Profession, 17 Yale Law & Social Policy Review 489 (1998); West California Litigation Forms: Civil Procedure Before Trial (1996)

- The Benjamin Aranda III Access to Justice Award (2010)
- The Shattuck-Price Award (2009)
- The Loren Miller Legal Services Award (2000)
- The Laurie D. Zelon Pro Bono Award (2000)
- The Charles Dorsey Award, NLADA (1999)
- The William Reece Smith Jr. Special Services to Pro Bono Award (1993)

Justice Zelon loves to hike and travel and often travels to hike. She has hiked on three continents and four island countries. In quieter times, reading and music bring her joy. Throughout her career, she has volunteered in civic and legal organizations and provided pro bono legal service. That service is a personal obligation to the community that inspires her on an ongoing basis.

Orange County, Nationwide