



**HON. DENNIS S. CHOATE**  
**Judge, Orange County Superior Court**  
**(Retired)**

Sixteen years as a trial deputy with the Los Angeles District Attorney followed by nearly twenty one years as a trial judge on the Orange County Superior Court has earned Judge Choate the well deserved admiration and respect of the Southern California legal community. While a sitting judge he served on the court's Personal Injury Panel, where he handled all manners of tort disputes. For sixteen years Judge Choate managed and presided over a broad spectrum of civil litigation. His average calendar was 485 per month.

Judge Choate presided over hundreds of civil trials during his two decades on the bench. He has served on the Court's executive committee for three terms. He also served three terms on the Superior Court Appellate Department including one year as its Presiding Judge. He was selected to be part of a pilot project which later became Direct Case Management where judges handle all aspects of their cases: writs and receivers, law and motion, settlement conferences, bench and jury trials. Judge Choate is a widely regarded as an informed and skilled neutral who has quickly earned a reputation as an outstanding settlement negotiator.

Judge Choate is known for creating innovative solutions to complex cases. He volunteers as a settlement judge for the Orange County Superior Court Mediation program. Judge Choate brings well deserved credibility and dependability to the mediator's chair. His common sense and friendly, respectful approach to the litigant has earned him high marks from counsel on both sides of the table. Early and final resolution is his goal.

Judge Choate serves as a mediator, arbitrator, referee, and private judge. He is also available as a confidential case and issue evaluator.

**AREAS OF EXPERTISE**

- Personal Injury, including catastrophic injury
- Business and Commercial Contract Disputes
- Employment
- Real Estate
- Medical/Legal/Professional Malpractice
- Products Liability
- Elder Abuse

**EDUCATION**

1968            University of California, Los Angeles, B.A.  
1972            Loyola University School of Law, J.D.  
2002            Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution, Masters' Forum

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **Judicial Experience**

2008 – Present Full time mediator, ADR Services, Inc.  
1989 – 2008 Orange County Superior Court Judge  
1993 – 1994 Appellate Department (Presiding Judge in 1994)  
1994 – 2008 Civil Litigation Panel  
1992 – 1994 Personal Injury Panel  
1989 – 1992 Criminal and Open Trial Court  
1987 – 1989 Orange County Municipal Court, West Orange County District

### **Legal & Trial Experience**

1972 – 1987 Deputy District Attorney, Los Angeles County  
  
Chief assignments: Major Crimes Section, Organized Crime and Narcotics Division,  
Hardcore Gang Division (108 felony jury trials)  
  
1970 – 1972 Senior Clerk, Office of the District Attorney, Los Angeles County

## **MEMBERSHIPS**

- State Bar of California
- Orange County Bar Association
- Orange County Bar Foundation Society of Fellows (Founding Fellow)
- Orange County Trial Lawyers Association
- Orange County Hispanic Bar Association
- Life Member Navy League
- California Judge's Association
- International Academy of Trial Judges
- Pepperdine Masters Mediation Program
- California Judges Association
- Civil Law and Procedure Committee
- Grand Jury Selection Committee
- Bench/Bar/Media Committee
- Life Member UCLA Alumni Association
- Friends of the Marlin (Founding Member, Commodore)
- International Game Fish Association, Certified Observer (Catch and Release)

## **TEACHING, LECTURES AND PANELS**

Presenter, lecturer, and seminar speaker on topics of civil trial practice, jury selection and mediation. He also has given many presentations on search and seizure law, evidence, major narcotics, organized crime, and prison gangs.

## **PERSONAL**

Judge Dennis S. Choate is the son of the distinguished late Los Angeles Superior Court judge, Raymond Choate (1919 - 2005).

As a high school student at Mira Costa High School, Judge Choate was a CIF champion middleweight wrestler. He was also undefeated in his division in Australia *and* Japan. While in high school he was a foreign exchange student with the American Field Service (AFS) and spent one year in South Australia. Judge Choate later attended UCLA on a wrestling scholarship. He is a member of Phi Kappa Psi fraternity and was active in the Blue Key Honor Society while in college. In his leisure time, Judge Choate enjoys sport fishing and high school and college sports. He is a supporter of catch and release fishing, and is a Certified Observer for the International Game Fishing Association (IGFA). He is a co-founder of Friends of the Marlin, a fishing and charitable organization now in its 29<sup>th</sup> year.

Judge Choate is a UCLA alumni (UCLA'68), along with his wife of 39 years (UCLA'68), and his two sons (UCLA 2000 and 2003). His mother, father and a sister also graduated from UCLA.