



HON. STEPHEN M. LACHS

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

(RETIRED)

Available as Trial Judge, Arbitrator, Mediator, Settlement Judge, Referee & Special Master. Experienced in Family Law, Contract, Tort, Construction, Real Property, Entertainment, Environmental, Probate, Insurance and other General Business areas.

JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court, 1979-1999
Supervising Judge, Mental Health Courts, 1980-1981
Supervising Judge, Family Law Courts, 1985-1986
Justice Pro Tem – California Supreme Court
Justice Pro Tem – California Court of Appeal
Commissioner – Los Angeles Superior Court, 1975-1979

RECOGNITION

Voted one of California's 50 Top Neutrals (Los Angeles Daily Journal)
Voted one of California's 25 Top Family Law Neutrals (Los Angeles Daily Journal)

EDUCATION

University of California at Los Angeles, LLB-1963, BA-1960

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Of the twenty years Judge Lachs served on the Los Angeles Superior Court, ten of those were as a trial judge in Central Civil. He was among the first twenty-five judges selected to implement the fast-track program of individual calendaring when that program was instituted, and served on the committee which formulated the rules for fast-track courts. Several years later, he was selected to be the first trial judge to hear complex litigation in Central Civil West. He served there for two years and then returned to his fast-track court.

His experience includes handling major, complex cases involving insurance coverage issues, commercial litigation, employment litigation and medical malpractice. He was known for thoroughly reading the papers filed by attorneys and doing the research required to understand all aspects of the cases he handled. His reputation for scholarly research was enhanced by the fact that for nine years he chaired the prestigious BAJI committee, which writes the jury instructions used in all courts in California and other states. He has lectured for groups such as the CEB and the Litigation Section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association and has frequently taught other judges at Judicial Institutes.

Judge Lachs has had extensive experience in Family Law Matters. In addition to sitting as a trial judge, he served two years as Supervising Judge for Family Law in Los Angeles County. During his last three years on the bench, his assignment was to hear long-cause cases, those that, due to their complexity, were estimated to take five days or more to try. Judge Lachs was the trial judge in the frequently cited cases of Marriage of Frick, 181 CA3d 997, Marriage of Kozen, 185 CA3d 1258, and Michael H. v. Gerald D. 491 US 110. Judge Lachs has considerable experience at the delicate task of overseeing cases involving public figures including the dissolutions of Tony Bennett, Rod Steiger, Billy Bob Thornton, Janet Jackson and an heir to the Keck oil fortune. He has tried cases involving owners and executives of major corporations where sensitive information was involved.

Judge Lachs has lectured extensively on issues in Family Law including lectures for the Rutter Group, CEB Programs, the American Bar Association Family Law Section and the California CPA Educational Foundation. He has taught Family Law at Whittier College of Law and also for the California Judges at their various institutes.

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