

## Building Bridges of Justice: Observations from the Chief Justice of California, the Hon. Patricia Guerrero

Chief Justice of California



**Bridging the Past, Present  
and Future of Justice**  
2024 Conference, October 17-19, San Diego



Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero is the 29th Chief Justice of California. She was sworn into office on January 2, 2023, making history as the first Latina to serve as California's Chief Justice.

In her [2024 State of the Judiciary Address](#), Chief Justice Guerrero highlighted the importance of three-branch solutions to challenging issues, including the use of remote technology and climate change, her concern about partisan attacks on the judiciary, and the evolving issue of generative artificial intelligence.

Chief Justice Guerrero also renewed her commitment to civic learning and engagement with the Judicial Branch Power of Democracy Civic Learning Initiative—programs including the Civic Learning Awards and Judges in the Classroom, as well as assisting with the development of new programs to foster improved civic learning opportunities for California's K-12 students.

She first joined the California Supreme Court as an associate justice in March 2022, making her the first Latina on the state's high court. In December 2017, she was confirmed as an associate justice on the Fourth District Court of Appeal, Division One in San Diego. From 2013 to 2017, she served as a judge on the Superior Court of San Diego County.

Chief Justice Guerrero is the daughter of Mexican immigrants and was born and raised in California's Imperial Valley. She attended the University of California, Berkeley as an undergraduate and earned a Juris Doctor degree from Stanford Law School in 1997.

In July 2022, Chief Justice Guerrero was elected to the American Law Institute, an independent national organization that produces scholarly work to clarify, modernize and otherwise improve the law.

## Introduction Remarks:



### **Hon. Judith McConnell, Presiding Justice, Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District**

Administrative Presiding Justice Judith McConnell was appointed to the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division One in August 2001 and on September 29, 2003, she was appointed by the Chief Justice as Administrative Presiding Justice of the Fourth Appellate District.

She served for 23 years on the San Diego Superior Court and was twice elected as the Presiding Judge. She also served as Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court and Supervising Judge of the family, appellate, and civil law and motion departments.

Throughout her judicial career, she has worked to eliminate all forms of bias in the courts, to improve the court system and to make the court more accessible through better case management. She was a member of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Jury System Improvement, the Commission on the Future of the Courts, and the Advisory Committee on Gender Bias in the Courts.

She is a recipient of the 2001 Judicial Council Jurist of the Year Award and in 1999, she was the first recipient of the Benjamin Aranda Access to Justice Award. In 2019, she received the American Bar Association's Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award.

Justice McConnell was a founder and first president of Lawyers Club of San Diego and was a founder and president of the National Association of Women Judges. She currently serves as chair of the Chief Justice's Civic Learning Initiative, Power of Democracy, and leads the branch wide civic learning effort to improve public understanding of the courts.