

Rules and Constraints on Judges Seeking Work-Life Balance

Saturday, October 19, 2024
10:30 – 11:45 AM



This session will assist judges in understanding the requirements and constraints on a trial court judge who seeks to balance court obligations with personal commitments, including family needs and mental and physical health concerns. Panelists will discuss the current rules and procedures governing absences from the courthouse; the role of the presiding judge in setting and enforcing policies; and the limitations of current requirements in recognizing the needs of judicial officers for work-life balance.

At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Understand which employment laws protect judges -- and which do not.
- Identify the pertinent Rules of Courts and policies affecting absences from court and the possibility of CJP proceedings.
- Understand the presiding judge's role in setting absence policies and assessing requests for absences.
- Recognizing the limitations and grey areas in current requirements and consider ideas for improvement.

SPEAKERS:



Hon. Lorna Alksne (Ret.), Mediator, Arbitrator, Special Master, Judge Pro Tem, JAMS

Hon. Lorna A. Alksne (Ret.) joined JAMS after over 20 years on the San Diego Superior Court. Judge Alksne served 10 years in the Family Law Division, where she presided over all areas of family law, and two years in the Civil Division, where she presided over all aspects of civil litigation. Prior to her retirement, from 2020 to 2022, Judge Alksne was the presiding judge of the San Diego Superior Court, which is the second-largest court in

California, with 154 bench officers.

During her tenure on the bench, Judge Alksne presided over discovery disputes, evidentiary hearings, pretrial motions and jury trials, and she served as a settlement conference judge for hundreds of

cases. In addition to her work on the bench, Judge Alksne was involved in the statewide administration of justice and served as chair of one of the Judicial Council’s advisory committees on calculating workload.

Judge Alksne has been recognized throughout her career with various awards, including most recently by the San Diego chapter of American Board of Trial Advocates for her exemplary service as presiding judge of the San Diego Superior Court during her two-year term. In addition, she has also been recognized by the San Diego Family Law Bar Association for her “Lifetime of Judicial Accomplishment and Dedication to Family Law” and by the Southern California chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers as Distinguished Judge of the Year, both in 2009.



Hon. Patricia Garcia (Ret.), Mediator, Private Judge, Arbitrator, Signature Resolution

Judge Patricia Garcia earned a psychology degree from UCSD, a juris doctorate from USD School of Law, and then worked in civil law firms for a decade, developing an expertise in family law, to become one of the most experienced family judges on the San Diego Superior Court, until her retirement on February 29, 2024. Judge Garcia continues to serve families by helping them settle their disputes as a private judge and mediator at

Signature Resolution.

In private practice, Judge Garcia was Of Counsel and head of the Family Law department at Seltzer Caplan McMahon Vitek, earning Martindale Hubbell’s AV lawyer rating. In 2000, she was selected by the San Diego Superior Court as a child support commissioner, serving in that capacity until her appointment by Governor Gray Davis in 2003. Judge Garcia continued to hone her skills and expertise in family law and supervised the family divisions in the branch courts until she took a criminal assignment in 2010, where she presided over numerous jury trials. In 2021, Judge Garcia returned to a family assignment, using her extensive trial experience and family expertise to preside over complex family law trials, settlement conferences and international custody disputes under The Hague Convention.

Judge Garcia has been a role model and mentor to women, students and the next generation of lawyers and judges. Throughout her professional career, Judge Garcia has endeavored to empower others through education and example. She is a member of NAWJ, CJA, CLJA, and a founding member of SDLJA.



Hon. Sophia Hall, Interim Acting Presiding Judge, Chancery Division, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois

Judge Hall is the Interim Acting Presiding Judge of the Chancery Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. She is also the Administrative Presiding Judge of the Resource Section of the Juvenile Justice and Child Protection Department, charged with creating initiatives to facilitate court and community collaboration to better serve children and families.

Judge Hall was elected Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County in 1980 and was the first woman in 20 years to serve in the Criminal Division (four years), and in the Chancery Division (five years). When assigned as the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division in 1992, she was the first woman ever to serve as the Presiding Judge of any Division or District of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Judge Hall is presently on the Board of Directors of the American Bar Foundation. She is past President of the National Association of Women Judges (1989) and of the Illinois Judges Association. She is past Chair of the National Judicial College Board of Trustees, and of the National Conference of State Trial Judges (ABA Judicial Division). She is a past member of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts, and of the Board of the State Justice Institute, appointed by President William J. Clinton in 1998, and serving until 2010.

Judge Hall received her Juris Doctor from Northwestern Pritzker School of Law and her Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Wisconsin.



Heather Rosing, Esq., CEO and President, Klinedinst, PC

Heather L. Rosing is CEO and President of Klinedinst PC. She litigates and tries complex cases, advises in the areas of ethics and risk management, and serves as an expert witness. In her decades of defending lawyers and other professionals, Ms. Rosing has numerous notable victories in legal malpractice cases in state court, federal court, and arbitration. She also defends judicial officers before the Commission on Judicial Performance.

Ms. Rosing is a Certified Specialist in Legal Malpractice and the Chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Lawyers Professional Liability. For many years, she has also been involved in the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ), assisting with the Success Inside and Out program at the Las Colinas Women's Facility and NAWJ annual conferences. She is currently the co-chair of the NAWJ Annual Conference Friends Committee, helping to prepare for the October 2024 NAWJ conference in San Diego.

She has also served in leadership roles of many other organizations, including as President of the San Diego County Bar Association and as the inaugural President of the CLA, the largest statewide voluntary Bar Association in the country.

Ms. Rosing has been the recipient of numerous accolades, including the Daniel T. Broderick III Award; the David H. Bartick Award for Civility and Professionalism; the Law Library Foundation's Excellence in Public Service Award; the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Foundation's Corporate Commitment to Diversity Award; and Lawyer of the Year by the San Diego Defense Lawyers.