



# *Superior Court of California*

COUNTY OF VENTURA  
Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue Ventura, CA  
93009

***Brenda L. McCormick***  
*Executive Officer/Clerk  
and Jury Commissioner*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: August 2, 2022

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## **JUDGE JOHN R. SMILEY RETIRES**

Judge John R. Smiley retired on August 1, 2022, from the Ventura County Superior Court. After a Criminal Law assignment for the first ten years of his judicial career, Judge Smiley spent the next 26 years presiding in Family Law. His combined 36 years of judicial service make Judge Smiley the longest serving judge in Ventura County history.

Judge Smiley was appointed to the Ventura Municipal Court by Governor George Deukmejian on July 2, 1986, and was formally sworn in on August 1, 1986. During his career as Municipal Court Judge, he served as Assistant Presiding Judge in 1992 and 1993 and then Presiding Judge in 1994 and 1995. He was subsequently elevated to the Ventura Superior Court in 1998 by way of consolidation of the Ventura Municipal and Superior Courts. He served as the Supervising Judge of the Family Law Division from 1998 to 2004 and then again from 2007 to 2013. Judge Smiley was elected by his peers as the Assistant Presiding Judge for 2001 through 2004 and as Presiding Judge for 2005 through 2006.

During his judicial career, Judge Smiley shared his expertise with other judges by educating through the Center on Judicial Education and Research on various topics including how best to serve as a presiding and supervising judge. Between 1992 through 1999, he instructed at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada. Locally, Judge Smiley taught at the Ventura College of Law between 1986 to 2012, teaching law students the techniques of criminal trial practice as well as principles of community property law. For his work, the students honored Judge Smiley with Outstanding Teacher Awards in 1995 and again in 2004.

During his career, Judge Smiley received numerous awards and honors including being named Judge of the Year in 2000 by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association and "Outstanding Jurist of the Year" in 2005 by Southern California chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

Judge Smiley's civic involvement in Ventura County has been extensive. He has served on and participated with many organizations and professional associations including: the Ventura Downtown and Ventura Beach Lions Club, from 1974 to 1992, including as Director from 1978 to 1982 and from 1984 to 1986; the Princeton Club of the Tri-Counties - Schools Committee, as Chairman from 1976 to 1979; the Ventura County Law Library, on the Board of Trustees, from 1980 to 1982 and from 1984 to 1987, and as Board President in 1986; and the Inns of Court, as a Master from 1996 to 1997, 2000 to 2001, and 2011 to 2013. As an avid golfer, Judge Smiley also served on the Board of Directors of Saticoy Country Club between 1982 and 1986, as Secretary from 1983 to 1985, and as President in 1986.

Judge Smiley served in the United States Air Force as a Reserve Officer from 1970 to 1979, achieving the rank of Captain. During his armed forces career, he served with the Judge Advocate's Office in 1974. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Princeton University and his Juris Doctor from Southwestern School of Law.

Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Smiley was a partner in the firm of Lucking, Bertelsen, Bysshe, Kuttler & Smiley in Ventura, where he practiced family and business law. He was managing partner of the firm from 1983 until his appointment to the bench in 1986.

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