



# *Superior Court of California*

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

*Michael D. Planet*  
*Executive Officer/Clerk*  
*and Jury Commissioner*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: March 23, 2011

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## **JUDGE VINCENT J. O'NEILL, Jr., NAMED JUDGE OF THE YEAR**

Judge Vincent J. O'Neill, Jr., was honored as Judge of the Year by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association on March 22 at their 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Judges' Night dinner. The award recognizes exceptional judicial performance balanced with courtesy and compassion toward litigants and attorneys in the courtroom.

Each year's honoree is selected by a committee comprised of a diverse group of trial lawyers from the civil and criminal arenas. The criteria used in the selection process are the attributes of wisdom, wit, patience, understanding, and compassion.

Judge O'Neill has served as a judge for 18 years. He is currently the Superior Court Presiding Judge and Supervising Judge of the Civil Division. He is a former Superior Court Assistant Presiding Judge and Presiding Judge of the Appellate Division. Past assignments have included appeals, civil trials and criminal trials.

Judge O'Neill was appointed to the Ventura Municipal Court by Governor Pete Wilson in 1992. He was elevated by the Governor to the Superior Court bench three years later.

Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge O'Neill was a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office for 13 years, eight of which were

in the position of Chief Deputy District Attorney. Before that, he was a Deputy Attorney General for two years in the Los Angeles criminal division.

Judge O'Neill has taught numerous statewide judicial education courses and is an adjunct professor at the Ventura College of Law. He has been active in many professional and community activities, and is the author of O'Neill's California Confessions Law.

Also honored at the event was Judge Roland N. Purnell, who retired in 2006 after 14 years on the bench as a judge and six years as a commissioner. A formal portrait was unveiled and presented to the court by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association. The association has selected one judge annually for the honor of a portrait since 1978.

Judge Purnell was appointed to the Municipal Court bench by Governor Pete Wilson in January 1992. He became a Superior Court Judge in 1998 upon unification of the Superior and Municipal Courts. He has presided over a full range of civil and criminal assignments, and was named Municipal Court Judge of the Year by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association in 1993. Before becoming a judge, he worked as an FBI Agent, Deputy District Attorney, Senior Trial Attorney, Superior Court Commissioner and Superior Court Legal Research Attorney.

His portrait and those of previous honorees can be viewed by the public in Courtroom 22 on the second floor of the Hall of Justice in Ventura.

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