



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

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Contact: Robert Sherman
Assistant Executive Officer
(805) 289-8514

JUDGE RONDA J. McKAIG NAMED JUDGE OF THE YEAR

The Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association (VCTLA) have named Judge Ronda J. McKaig as Judge of the Year for 2023. The honor was bestowed at the Association's annual Judges' Night dinner on March 27, 2024, at the Courtyard Marriott in Oxnard.

Judge McKaig was appointed to the bench by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., on July 20, 2018. She filled the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Frederick H. Bysshe in July of 2018.

Prior to her appointment, Judge McKaig served as Assistant County Counsel for the Ventura County Office of County Counsel beginning in 2014. Before then, she was Counsel at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP from 2010 to 2014, where she was an Associate from 2004 to 2010. She was an Associate at Clifford Chance, LLP from 2002 to 2004 and at Brobeck, LLP from 2001 to 2002.

Judge McKaig earned her law degree from Loyola Law School, Los Angeles and her Bachelor of Arts degree from California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks. She is currently assigned to the Civil Department in Courtroom 41. Judge McKaig also serves as the Presiding Judge of the Court's Appellate Division, and she is the Court's appointed judge for CEQA and the Assisted Outpatient Treatment calendars.

VCTLA Portrait Honorees

Also honored at the event were retired judges, Judge Ellen Gay Conroy, and Judge Vincent J. O'Neill, Jr., who were selected as VCTLA's Portrait Honorees for 2023. Formal portraits of Judge Conroy and Judge O'Neill were unveiled and presented to the court during the ceremony.

Judge Ellen Gay Conroy, Ret., was appointed to the bench by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on July 21, 2008. She filled the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Charles W. Campbell. Prior to her appointment, she had served as a Commissioner with the Ventura Superior Court beginning in March 2006.

Judge Conroy owned Creative Dissolution Family Law Mediation from 2002 to 2003. From 1997 to 2001, she was a Family Law Facilitator with the Ventura Superior Court, providing education and outreach assistance to unrepresented litigants in family law matters. As a Facilitator, she initiated the Family Law Pro Per Clinics, Initial Dissolution Classes, and the Family Law Self-Help Center. From 1984 to 1996, she was an Associate then Partner with Taylor McCord, a law corporation. She was a sole practitioner from 1982 to 1984.

Judge Conroy is a past president of the Family Law Section of the Ventura County Bar Association. She has been an adjunct professor at the Ventura College of Law, teaching Family Law Practice. During her time as a Family Law Facilitator, she chaired the California Family Law Facilitators Association. She has been a frequent speaker statewide on services to unrepresented parties.

Judge Conroy has received notable honors including the Women Lawyers of Ventura County Legacy 2012 Legacy Award, which is bestowed to a member of the community at large who has significantly contributed to the advancement of the aims and rights of women and girls in society.

Judge Conroy received her undergraduate degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and her Juris Doctorate, with honors, from the Ventura College of Law

Judge Conroy retired from the Ventura Superior Court on October 31, 2013.

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

Judge O'Neill is a former Superior Court Presiding Judge, Assistant Presiding Judge, Presiding Judge of the Appellate Division and Supervising Judge of the Civil Division.

Judge O'Neill retired from the Ventura County Superior Court after a 28-year career on the bench; the last 17 years of which were spent in the Civil Division. He served as the Civil Supervising Judge for over seven years and was the court's full-time settlement judge for six years. During 10 years of handling a civil vertical calendar and trial assignment, Judge O'Neill presided over many types of law and motion matters and trials, along with long-cause trials in other areas such as Family Law and Probate.

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.

Throughout his career, Judge O'Neill taught numerous statewide judicial education courses and was an adjunct professor at the Ventura College of Law. He was active in many professional and community activities and is the author of O'Neill's California Confessions Law. In 2011, he was named Judge of the Year by VCTLA.

The portraits of Judge Conroy and Judge O'Neill will be placed next to those of previous honorees in Courtroom 22 on the second floor of the Hall of Justice.

VCTLA has annually selected one or more judges for the portrait honor since 1978. The VCTLA Judge of the Year award recognizes exceptional judicial performance balanced with courtesy and compassion toward litigants and attorneys. Honorees are selected by a committee comprised of a diverse group of trial lawyers from the civil and criminal arenas.

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