



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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VENTURA SUPERIOR COURT ELECTS PRESIDING AND ASSISTANT PRESIDING JUDGES

The Judges of the Ventura Superior Court have elected Judge Matthew P. Guasco as Presiding Judge and Judge Ryan J. Wright as Assistant Presiding Judge. Their two-year terms will begin on January 1, 2025.

The Presiding Judge, with the assistance of the Court Executive Officer, is responsible for leading the court, establishing policies, and allocating resources in a manner that promotes equal access to justice, increases efficiency in court operations, and enhances service to the public. The Assistant Presiding Judge performs duties as assigned by the Presiding Judge, and in the absence of the Presiding Judge, exercises the powers of the Presiding Judge.

Judge Matthew P. Guasco was appointed to the Ventura Superior Court by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. in December 2011. Judge Guasco was honored as “*Judge of the Year*” for 2020 by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association. He is currently serving as the Assistant Presiding Judge and has served as the Presiding Appellate Judge (2015-2017) and as the Supervising Judge of the Civil Division (2020). Judge Guasco has been assigned to the Criminal, Appellate, Family and Civil Divisions of the Court. He has presided over more than 150 criminal and civil jury trials.

Prior to his appointment, Judge Guasco was a professional mediator and arbitrator as well as an appellate practitioner. He served as Of Counsel to Arnold, LaRochelle, Mathews, Van Conas & Zirbel, LLP (2008 - 2010), and Norman Dowler, LLP (2001- 2008). He was a sole practitioner with Innovative Mediation (1998-2001), an associate attorney with Engle & Carobini (1993-1998), and an associate with Lascher & Lascher (1989-1993). He began his legal career as a Deputy Public Defender with the Marin County Public Defender (1985-1989).

Judge Guasco is a past president of the Ventura County Bar Association. He is a member of the faculty of the Center for Judicial Education & Research, Judicial Council of California. Judge Guasco has served on the workgroup appointed by the Chief Justice to develop the curriculum for judicial ethics education. He also teaches judicial ethics. Judge Guasco is a graduate of the University of California, Davis (1980), and Golden Gate University School of Law (1984).

Judge Guasco is currently assigned to Department 20 where he presides over limited and unlimited civil cases for all purposes, including pretrial motions and trials.

Judge Ryan J. Wright was elected by Ventura County voters on June 8, 2010, and was sworn into office on January 3, 2011. He currently serves as the Supervising Judge of the Criminal Division and presides over the Court's Criminal Master Calendar.

Judge Wright was born and raised in the City of Ventura. He attended Saint Bonaventure High School. Judge Wright earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of California, Irvine, in 1994, and his Juris Doctor from Pepperdine University School of Law in 1997. While at Pepperdine, Judge Wright was elected to the position of Honor Board President.

Judge Wright began his career in public service while still in law school as a Reserve Deputy Probation Officer for the County of Los Angeles. During that time, Judge Wright spent countless hours counseling violent juvenile offenders. It was also during that time that Judge Wright clerked at both the Ventura County Public Defender's Office and the Ventura County District Attorney's Office.

Upon his law school graduation in 1997, Judge Wright was offered a full-time position as a Deputy District Attorney in the Ventura County District Attorney's Office. He was promoted to Senior Deputy District Attorney in 2007. During his years as a prosecutor, Judge Wright served in the misdemeanor, felony, sexual assault, domestic violence and narcotics units. He was also assigned full time to the Thousand Oaks Police station for two years as the community prosecutor for Thousand Oaks. Judge Wright has been recognized with several awards as one of the top narcotics prosecutors in the state and in the nation by the United States Department of Justice, the United States Attorney's Office and the California Narcotics Association. Judge Wright was also honored twice as Ventura County Prosecutor of the Year.

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