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: October 1, 2024

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GOVERNOR APPOINTS COMMISSIONER RUSSEL-PAUL H. KAWAI TO SUPERIOR COURT JUDGESHIP

On September 30, 2024, Governor Gavin Newsom announced the appointment of Ventura Superior Court Commissioner Russel-Paul H. Kawai to a judgeship at the Ventura Superior Court. The appointment authorizes him to begin his judicial duties immediately. Judge Kawai fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Rocky J. Baio. Judge Kawai was selected as Court Commissioner by the Ventura Superior Court Judges in 2021.

Judge Kawai is currently assigned to Courtroom 12 at the Hall of Justice in Ventura where he oversees misdemeanor arraignments, out of county warrants and bench warrant holds. He also conducts the Unlawful Detainer calendar.

Prior to being selected as Court Commissioner, Judge Kawai served as a Senior Deputy Public Defender with the Ventura County Public Defender's Office from 2014 to 2021. From 2010 to 2014, he was a sole practitioner in Provo, Utah. Before that, Judge Kawai was a Trial Attorney with the Utah County Public Defender Association from 2007 to 2010 and was a Junior Partner at Esplin/Weight from 2001 to 2006.

Judge Kawai earned his Juris Doctor degree from J. Reuben Clark School of Law at BYU, (2001) and his Bachelor of Science in Political Science/Sociology at BYU (1998).

Judge Kawai served from 2008 to 2011 on the Utah Governor's Task Force charged with the development and implementation of legislation and programs to reduce gang-related activity, crime and violence within Utah communities. Since 2023, Judge Kawai has served as a Military Judge in the United States Army Reserves in the Army's 6th Judicial Circuit. Judge Kawai deployed with the U.S. military to Iraq in 2003, to Afghanistan in 2006-07, and to Kosovo in 2019. He is the recipient of the Bronze Star Medal.

The date of Judge Kawai's formal enrobement ceremony will be announced in the near future.

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