

NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

400 McAllister Street, Room 205
San Francisco, CA 94102-4512
Phone: 415-551-5737
FAX: 415-551-5701



T. MICHAEL YUEN
COURT EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Contact:

Ann E. Donlan
(415) 551-5957
adonlan@sftc.org
Follow Us on Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/SFSuperiorCourt>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 4, 2016

JUDGE ERNEST H. GOLDSMITH ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT AFTER HIGH-PROFILE ASSIGNMENTS IN LAW & MOTION, CEQA & ASBESTOS DURING NEARLY 20 YEARS ON SF BENCH

Architect of Mandatory Electronic Filing and Service Program for Asbestos Litigation

SAN FRANCISCO -- Judge Ernest H. Goldsmith, who presided over Law & Motion, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Asbestos and many other Civil cases during nearly two decades on the San Francisco bench, will retire effective April 14, 2016.

Appointed to the Superior Court of California for San Francisco in 1996, Judge Goldsmith served all but two of his 20 years in Civil assignments – the majority of that time in Department 613 at the Civic Center Courthouse. He most recently served in Law & Motion, where he handled a busy motions calendar and decided many high-profile pre-trial motions and injunction requests, including disputes involving the San Francisco Police Department, assisted suicide and the California Public Utilities Commission.

“These years have been by far the best of my professional life,” Judge Goldsmith said. “I have enjoyed my tenure immensely. I consider myself fortunate to have had so many interesting and challenging cases, including the asbestos cases which I lost count of, and years of environmental cases. It brings to mind a comment by one of my colleagues when I first came to

-MORE-

JUDGE GOLDSMITH/SFSC
2-2-2-2

the bench, 'Do they really pay us for something we enjoy so much?' The relationships with my colleagues through the years have been gratifying beyond my powers of description."

Presiding Judge John K. Stewart praised Judge Goldsmith for his enduring contributions.

"Judge Goldsmith promulgated the orders which guided our handling of asbestos cases for literally decades," Judge Stewart said. "He also has taken on some of the most interesting and complex cases we have had not only in terms of legal issues, but also in terms of political repercussions. He has done it all with skill and aplomb which makes us all proud to be members of the San Francisco bench."

As the Court's CEQA Judge, Judge Goldsmith decided challenges to the California Clean Air Act of 2006 and the implementation of cap and trade. Other significant environmental actions included the Coastal Commission Malibu Lagoon revision project; Department of Fish and Game Klamath River fishery environment case; and the San Francisco Hunters Point development case.

Judge Goldsmith was in charge of developing and implementing mandatory electronic filing and service for asbestos litigation in San Francisco – a legacy and contribution to the Court that have guided numerous other courts in California and throughout the country. Judge Goldsmith also oversaw the drafting and adoption of the asbestos-related local rules. His past assignments included serving as Asbestos General Orders Judge.

In addition to asbestos and environmental cases, Judge Goldsmith has presided over a vast number of Civil trials, including commercial, real estate, leases, insurance coverage and bad faith, torts, contracts, employment including class actions, malpractice, toxic torts, fraud, consumer class actions, probate, trusts, trade secret, and other cases. He also served two years in a Criminal assignment.

Despite his demanding Law & Motion and Civil trial assignments, Judge Goldsmith has been a frequent presenter at continuing legal education seminars for California attorneys and Judges on trial practice; jury selection; developments in California law; discovery; electronic discovery; asbestos and toxic tort litigation; law and motion practice; expert witnesses; CEQA;

-MORE-

JUDGE GOLDSMITH/SFSC
3-3-3-3

environmental law; and expert evidence law.

He also has served as Judicial Adviser to the State Bar Litigation Section Executive Committee. In 2005, the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association named Judge Goldsmith as Trial Judge of the Year.

By the time Republican Gov. Pete Wilson appointed Judge Goldsmith to the bench in 1996, he was an experienced litigator and prosecutor. As an Assistant District Attorney in San Francisco, he tried more than 45 felonies to verdict, including numerous homicides. He left the Office of the District Attorney in 1973 for private practice, where he specialized in commercial litigation and nonprofit organization law. He represented nonprofit corporations, foundations, hospitals, healthcare organizations and Asian mutual benefit nonprofits. He served as Chair of the State Bar Nonprofit Organizations Committee, and chaired the committee which drafted legislation and revisions to Corporations Code nonprofit statutes.

Judge Goldsmith earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. He earned a J.D. from Stanford Law School.

Judge Goldsmith's retirement leaves three vacancies on the 52-member San Francisco Superior Court Bench.

###