

NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO



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THE LONGEST-SERVING BENCH OFFICER IN SAN FRANCISCO ANNOUNCES HER RETIREMENT AFTER SERVING NEARLY 24 YEARS IN THE UNIFIED FAMILY COURT

Recognized statewide as a leader in family law after a distinguished 23-year tenure on the San Francisco Superior Court bench, Commissioner Rebecca Wightman is retiring, effective June 28.

Appointed on August 15, 2000, Commissioner Wightman is currently the longest-serving judicial officer on the San Francisco bench, having the distinction of serving under 13 different presiding judges. She is universally regarded throughout the state as an expert in family law, particularly in the area of Title IV-D child support and has provided orientation on child support and paternity for all new child support commissioners in the state for more than 20 years.

“Commissioner Wightman has provided outstanding leadership in our Unified Family Court in San Francisco and throughout the state,” Presiding Judge Anne-Christine Massullo said. “As the co-author of *Benchguides on Establishing and Enforcing Support* in 2014 and co-authoring the *Child and Spousal Support Bench Handbook* in 2019, her influence and expertise will endure long after her retirement. The Court is proud of her many lasting contributions and her leadership role as an advisory member of the Judicial Council of California in 2018-2020 as well as a member of the Court’s Executive

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**COMMISSIONER WIGHTMAN/SFSC
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Committee. We congratulate Commissioner Wightman on her outstanding public service to families and the administrations of justice throughout California.”

Presiding Judge Massullo also commended Commissioner Wightman for her kind and empathetic approach to handling delicate family law matters. “As the former Supervising Judge of the Unified Family Court, I know the difficulties inherent in this complex area of law. Commissioner Wightman handled these cases deftly, with the utmost professionalism, patience and personal attention. We will miss her deep knowledge and commitment to serving the best interests of the parents and children involved in the many thousands of cases on her calendars.”

As she contemplated her impending retirement, Commissioner Wightman thanked her judicial colleagues and court staff for their help through the years. “It truly has been an honor and a privilege to work for the court here in San Francisco, which has been a home away from home for me. I also cannot say enough about the court staff who are the backbone of this Court. They have helped me day in and day out as I presided over thousands of calendars. I am especially grateful for having been able to work alongside many wonderful colleagues – judges who have retired before me, and those still on the bench, some of whom had a hand in allowing me to create those pilots and special calendars that helped address issues involving families that were – and still are – near and dear to my heart.”

Here are some career highlights:

Innovations

- Worked in partnership with Director Karen Roye of the San Francisco Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) to create the first in the nation “In-Kind” Support Calendar, a pilot that started in 2023 with its first hearing this year, allowing flexibility to families interested in providing support for their children with in-kind services or goods, or a combination of money, services and goods in lieu of

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money to satisfy support obligations (modeled after tribal laws focusing on family responsibility).

- Wrote and received several grants to improve the administration of justice – one involving cross-over issues between cases in dependency and child support, and one to study ways to reduce the default rate in child support cases, the latter one resulting in the creation of a special Enhanced Parental Involvement Collaboration (EPIC) calendar. EPIC, which is ongoing, ultimately reduced the Court’s default rate in her department from almost 60%, down to an average of 20%, which has held steady for well over a decade.

Awards

- Presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2023 at the annual San Francisco Bar Association’s View From the Bench by the San Francisco Unified Family Court.
- Received the Inaugural Commissioner of the Year Award from the California Court Commissioners Association in 2015.

Committees

- Served on multiple Court committees over the years, including the Court’s Executive, Personnel, Civil Grand Jury, and IT committees.
- Served on the Joint DCSS/Judicial Council of California (JCC) Judicial Stakeholders Committee since its inception in January 2002, an inter-agency forum between the California Department of Child Support Services and judicial branch stakeholders (representatives from the JCC, Commissioners and Family Law Facilitators) to provide a venue for the exchange of information and discussion on a broad range of topics regarding policies, procedures and practices that impact child support programs statewide.

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To prepare for Commissioner Wightman's retirement, the bench has appointed family law attorney Bobby P. Luna to conduct hearings and conferences in family law proceedings with a primary assignment in the AB1058/Title IV-D Child Support Department. Commissioner Luna was sworn in on June 3.

A Court Commissioner serves as a subordinate judicial officer under the general direction of the Supervising Judge of the Unified Family Court. The San Francisco bench is comprised of 52 judges and one commissioner.

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