

NEWS RELEASE
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO



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**CJP INVESTIGATION 'FOUND NO BASIS FOR
ACTION' RELATED TO ALLEGATIONS THAT
JUDGE BRADEN C. WOODS DEMONSTRATED A
PATTERN OF BIAS, DEMEANING CONDUCT TOWARD
WOMEN OF COLOR IN THE PUBLIC DEFENDER'S
OFFICE**

**Nearly 4-year-old Allegations Resurrected This Week Were Closed by
the CJP in 2023**

Allegations from the Public Defender's Office in December 2021 that Judge Braden C. Woods had made "sexually charged and inappropriate statements," lost his temper while on the bench, and was "demeaning young women attorneys of color who appear in his courtroom" were thoroughly investigated and closed after a 16-month Commission on Judicial Performance investigation, Court Executive Officer Brandon E. Riley announced today.

According to an April 6, 2023 [letter](#) responding to the Public Defender's complaint, "the commission found no basis for action against the judge or determined not to proceed further in this matter." The letter, sent to Matt

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Gonzalez, Chief Attorney of the San Francisco Public Defender's Office, and disclosed by the Public Defender's Office, stated that the determination was reached "after considering all of the information before it about this matter."

While it is unusual for the Court to comment on CJP investigations, it is imperative to refute these unfounded allegations – which surfaced again this week in a new felony case in a motion seeking disqualification of Judge Woods for cause.

"There is an established process known as California Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) § 170.6 to challenge a judicial officer for disqualification without the requirement to prove any bias or unfair conduct," Riley said. "This process was not utilized in the new case. Instead, these nearly 4-year-old allegations, which formed 'no basis for action,' were made public this week in a motion under California Code of Civil Procedure 170.1, which requires disqualification for cause. It is essential that the public understands that these allegations were thoroughly scrutinized and subsequently no action was taken against Judge Woods."

A story published in the Mission Local on June 5, 2025 contained these inaccuracies that warrant correction:

- The San Francisco District Attorney's Office **did not** "make similar claims against Woods to CJP."
- Judge Woods was not "removed" from the Hall of Justice to the Civic Center Courthouse when the CJP complaint was filed as a "consequence" to "hear lower level cases."

Judge Woods, who is African-American, is a veteran jurist who has handled

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criminal, civil, dependency and juvenile cases since his appointment to the bench in 2012. Before his judicial appointment, he served in multiple leadership positions in the District Attorney's Office. **Since January 2024, he has presided over some 20 criminal jury trials in which the Public Defender's Office has represented the defendant – without incident or complaint.**

Judge Woods is [not permitted](#) to speak about a pending or impending case under California Code of Judicial Ethics Canon 3B(9), which states that "a judge shall not make any public comment about a pending or impending proceeding in any court."

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