

NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

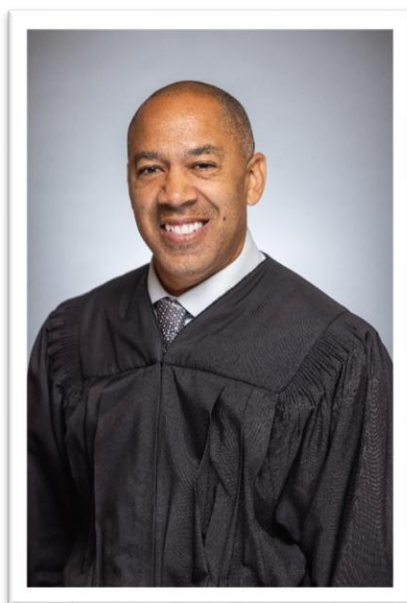


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BRANDON E. RILEY
Court Executive Officer

SAN FRANCISCO SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES ELECT THE HON. CHRISTOPHER C. HITE AS NEXT PRESIDING JUDGE



SAN FRANCISCO, CA - The judges of the San Francisco Superior Court have elected Assistant Presiding Judge Christopher C. Hite to serve as the Court's next Presiding Judge. Judge Hite will begin a two-year term on January 1, 2027, succeeding current Presiding Judge Rochelle C. East. As Presiding Judge, he will lead the Court in partnership with Court Executive Officer Brandon E. Riley, overseeing judicial assignments, court operations, and helping set administrative and budget priorities.

"It is a privilege to be elected by my colleagues to serve as Presiding Judge," Judge Hite said. "Our responsibility is to make sure the people of San Francisco have a court that is accessible, transparent, and responsive to the community it serves. I look forward to strengthening our engagement with the public, investing in the training and development of our judges, and continuing the work toward a new criminal courthouse. I am grateful to Presiding Judge East for including me so closely in the decisions facing our Court over the past two years, and I intend to continue that collaborative approach."

"Judge Hite has been a true partner in leading this Court over the past two years," current Presiding Judge East said. "He brings broad experience across our civil, criminal, and traffic divisions, a deep understanding of court operations, and a genuine commitment to the judges, staff, and communities we serve. I know he will approach this role collaboratively and thoughtfully, and I look forward to working with him over the coming months to ensure a smooth transition."

Judge Hite has served as Assistant Presiding Judge since January 2025, working with Presiding Judge East on court-wide matters while continuing to preside over trials. His current work includes civil and criminal jury and bench trials, including complex civil litigation and misdemeanor and felony cases.

Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. appointed Judge Hite to the San Francisco Superior Court in December 2015. He joined the bench in January 2016 and has since served in assignments throughout the Court. He began in the Traffic Division and became its Supervising Judge later that year. His subsequent assignments have included preliminary hearings and felony arraignments, felony pretrial settlements, the misdemeanor master calendar, felony jury trials, and civil and criminal trials.

From 2018 to 2019, Judge Hite handled the Court's felony pretrial settlement calendar while also conducting misdemeanor and felony trials. During that period, he conducted hundreds of pretrial conferences, settling a significant number of cases. In 2022, he served as Supervising Judge of the Criminal Division as the Court continued addressing pandemic-related trial delays, coordinating judicial assignments and working to reduce the trial backlog.

Judge Hite has also presided in all of the Court's criminal collaborative courts, including the Community Justice Center, Drug Court, Young Adult Court, Intensive Supervision Court, and Veterans Justice Court, as well as assignments involving mental health, domestic violence, and probation matters.

Judge Hite has served on the San Francisco Superior Court's Appellate Division, hearing writs and appeals arising from misdemeanor criminal, limited civil, and real property matters. He has also served as a Pro Tem Justice on the California Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Four, handling civil, criminal, CEQA, probate, and family law matters.

Beyond his courtroom assignments, Judge Hite served on the Court's Executive Committee from 2017 to 2020 and has chaired its Local Rules and Events committees. He has also served on committees and workgroups involving new judge orientation, the Civil Grand Jury, pretrial detention, court technology and electronic records, and the development of trial protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also served on the selection committees for the Court Executive Officer and Family Law Commissioner.

Before joining the bench, Judge Hite spent nearly 18 years as a San Francisco Deputy Public Defender, serving in assignments that included research, collaborative courts, clean slate, mental health, misdemeanor and felony cases. At the time of his appointment, he was assigned to the felony unit handling serious and violent felony cases. Earlier in his career, Judge Hite practiced civil and criminal litigation, with work that included civil rights, employment, landlord-tenant and appellate matters.

Judge Hite also served as the first chair of the San Francisco Public Defender's Office Racial Justice Committee and chaired the Civilian Review Subcommittee of the Bar Association of San Francisco's Task Force on Criminal Justice Reform.

Judge Hite earned his bachelor's and law degrees from Santa Clara University and a master's degree in psychology from Golden Gate University.

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