



Hon. David L. Belz, Ret.



Results Beyond DisputeSM

Judge Belz served on the Orange County Superior Court Bench for 15 years following 32 years as a trial attorney. During his years as a trial attorney, he handled a wide assortment of personal injury cases to trial and verdict in both state and federal courts. In 2009, he was appointed to the Orange County Superior Court. In January 2010, he was assigned to a family law courtroom where he handled a broad range of family law matters from initial petition to trial. Judge Belz says his five years in family court were some of the most meaningful years of his professional career. He was particularly interested in high-conflict custody and visitation cases and the toxic stress impact those cases have on children. He has written and taught on the subject of toxic stress and children. In 2016, Judge Belz was assigned to a probate courtroom where he handled various probate calendars. He was asked to handle the complex long-cause trust trials with a time estimate of more than 4 days. In the nine years on the probate panel, Judge Belz has handled trust, probate, guardianship, and conservatorship trials. As long-cause trial judge, he has handled 88 trust trials. He has presided over trust trials up to 22 days in length. Judge Belz strongly believes in settlement. A graduate of the Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution in December of 2000, Judge Belz began mediating cases during his years as a trial attorney from 2001 to 2009. He has handled several hundred mediations. A trial lawyer by trade, he enjoyed sitting as a bench officer in the long and complicated trust trials but strongly believes, with few exceptions, that every case can and should settle. Judge Belz's extensive trial experience with juries and as a bench trial officer has given him a keen insight into assessing the strengths and weaknesses of cases. Judge Belz understands the importance of patience, persistence, empathy, and trust in the mediation process.

LEGAL CAREER & PRIOR EXPERIENCE

- Full-time Neutral, Judicate West (2024-Present)
- Judge, Orange County Superior Court (2009-2024); Family Law and Probate Departments
- Partner, Law Offices of Kuhn & Belz (1998-2009); Handled a variety of personal injury cases including vehicular accidents, premises liability, government liability, excessive force and police shootings, product liability, medical malpractice, elder abuse, and federal maritime cases.
- Sole Practitioner, Law Offices of David L. Belz (1995-1998)
- Partner and Managing Attorney, Law Offices of Landgren & Belz (1981-1995)
- Partner, Law Offices of Giles, Callahan, McCune, Willis & Edwards (1976-1981)

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- J.D., Pepperdine University School of Law (1975)
- B.A., California State University, Fullerton (1972)
- Mediating the Litigated Case, Straus Institute, Pepperdine University School of Law (2000)
- Family + Probate Law Committees, Judicial Council's Center for Judicial Education and Research
- Judicial Council's Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee
- Teaching Faculty, Training for judges newly appointed to probate and family law courts
- Orange County Trial Lawyers, Board Member (1990-1994; 1999-2009)
- St. Thomas More Society of Orange County, Founding Member and President (1994-2004)

PRACTICE AREAS

All types of Personal Injury including Wrongful Death; Elder Care Law; Family Law; Maritime & Admiralty; Medical Malpractice; Probate/Trust & Estate

ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS

- St. Thomas More Society Award (2002)
- J. Reuben Clark Law Society Award -Service, Personal Integrity & Professional Excellence (2018)

HOBBIES & INTERESTS

Judge Belz has an athletic background, having played high school and college basketball. He has been an avid golfer since high school. He strives to live a healthy personal and professional life by balancing his family, spiritual, and professional life. He is an admirer and student of St.Thomas More, the subject of the 1966 Academy Award-winning best picture, "A Man for All Seasons".

LOCATIONS

Orange County, Southern California