

2025 New Judicial Council Members' Bios
(New and Reappointed)

NEW MEMBERS

Hon. Michael Rhoads (Voting Member)

Judge, Superior Court of San Francisco County

Term: September 15, 2025–September 14, 2028

Judge Michael Rhoads was appointed to the Superior Court of San Francisco County in December 2022 by Governor Gavin Newsom. He currently sits in a criminal trial department and oversees the court's criminal domestic violence calendar. He previously was assigned to a felony pre-trial and preliminary hearings calendar department.

Prior to being appointed to the bench, Judge Rhoads was a chambers attorney for former Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye at the California Supreme Court, and a Deputy Legal Affairs Secretary for Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. He previously worked at the California Attorney General's Office and the San Diego District Attorney's Office.

Judge Rhoads has served as faculty and prepared educational materials for the Judicial Council's Center for Judicial Education and Resources for a variety of subject matters, including criminal sentencing, pretrial release, and preliminary hearings. He has been an adjunct professor at the University of San Diego School of Law, McGeorge School of Law, and University of California College of the Law, San Francisco. Judge Rhoads has also served on several local and national bar association committees. He received his bachelor's degree from Santa Clara University and a juris doctor degree from George Washington University Law School.

Ms. Dena Stone (Voting Member)

Assistant Public Defender, Sacramento County Public Defender's Office

Term: September 15, 2025–September 14, 2028

Ms. Dena Stone has served as an assistant public defender with the Sacramento County Public Defender's Office since 2020. She has practiced law in criminal courts for over 15 years in the counties of Sacramento, Shasta, and El Dorado. She is a seasoned public defender with trial experience that includes homicide, human trafficking, and complex felony cases. As a lead Racial Justice Act attorney, Ms. Stone developed procedures and litigated precedent-setting cases statewide. She's also an expert in motion practice, case strategy, and appellate litigation, including matters before the California Supreme Court. Ms. Stone received her juris doctor degree from the University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law, where she serves as an adjunct professor and mock trial coach, focusing on persuasive analysis strategies, criminal law, civil procedure, litigation strategies, and evidentiary issues.

Hon. Jeffrey C. Kauffman (Advisory Member)

Judge, Superior Court of Solano County

Term: September 15, 2025–September 14, 2026

Judge Jeffrey C. Kauffman is appointed to the council as the president of the California Judges Association (CJA). He was appointed to the bench by Governor Edmund G. “Jerry” Brown, Jr., in 2018. Judge Kauffman currently serves as the supervising judge of the criminal division of the Superior Court of Solano County and has served on the CJA Executive Board since 2022. Prior to the bench, he practiced law in the Solano County District Attorney’s Office. He earned his juris doctor degree from the University of California College of the Law, San Francisco.

Hon. Patricia L. Kelly (Advisory Member)

Presiding Judge, Superior Court of Santa Barbara County

Term: September 15, 2025–September 14, 2026

Judge Patricia L. Kelly was appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to the Superior Court of Santa Barbara County in 2010 and currently serves as presiding judge of the court. Before her current role, she served a previous term as presiding judge and assistant presiding judge and has been active in other leadership roles within the court, including supervising criminal judge and executive committee member. Judge Kelly will serve as the next chair of the Judicial Council’s Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee and its Executive Committee. She also serves as a member of the Court Facilities Advisory Committee and the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee and has served as cochair and faculty for the Presiding Judge and Court Executive Officer Court Management Institute. Prior to the bench, Judge Kelly served as a deputy district attorney for the Santa Barbara County District Attorney’s Office assigned to serious and violent gang and major narcotic cases, including multidefendant homicide cases. She received her juris doctor degree from Pepperdine University School of Law.

Mr. David Slayton (Advisory Member)

Court Executive Officer, Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Term: September 15, 2025–September 14, 2028

Mr. David Slayton is the court executive officer for the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. He will serve as the next vice-chair of the Court Executives Advisory Committee and its Executive Committee. He has 26 years of experience in court administration at the local, state, and federal levels of the judiciary, with expertise in various court system operations. Mr. Slayton has significant experience in judicial branch leadership and governance as the former executive of the district courts in Texas and federal district courts and Executive Director of the Texas Judicial Council. He has expertise in budgeting and fiscal management, technology, caseload management, court performance metrics, and other court modernization initiatives and was a

nationally certified trainer in these areas, as well as a consultant in multiple court systems across the country. Mr. Slayton is also skilled in policy reform, having led analyses and reform of various significant judicial branch issues such as juvenile justice, guardianship, bail practices, fines and fees, and the intersection of justice and mental health. He currently serves on the Judicial Council's Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee and its Formula Methodology Subcommittee, the Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee, and the Court Executives Advisory Committee Joint Rules, Legislation, and Caseflow Management subcommittees. Mr. Slayton has a master's degree in public administration from Troy University and a bachelor's degree in political science from Texas Tech University.

REAPPOINTED MEMBERS

Hon. Joan K. Irion* (Advisory to Voting member)

Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal,

Fourth Appellate District

Term: September 15, 2025–September 14, 2028

Justice Joan K. Irion was confirmed as a justice of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division One, in September 2003, following her appointment by Governor Gray Davis. Previously, she served on the Superior Court of San Diego County, and before the bench, she worked in private practice for more than 20 years specializing in tax and business litigation.

Justice Irion devotes substantial time to civics education for youth and to the improvement of California's courts through her work on behalf of self-represented litigants, and she frequently serves as a lecturer for judicial courses and continuing education classes for the appellate bar. She currently serves on the Judicial Council's Appellate Advisory Committee as vice-chair. She served as president of the California Association of Young Lawyers Association and as a member of the National Association of Women Judges Board of Directors, State Bar Board of Governors, the Judicial Nominees Evaluation Commission, and the American Bar Association House of Delegates. She is a lifetime member of the American Law Institute.

Hon. Maria Lucy Armendariz (Voting Member)

Judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Term: September 15, 2025–September 14, 2028

Judge Lucy Armendariz was appointed to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County in 2018. She currently serves as assistant supervising judge of criminal division (Traffic). She was first appointed to the bench in 2007 at the State Bar Court where she served as Supervising Judge and maintained a heavy docket of cases that included trials, motion hearings and settlement conferences.

Judge Armendariz has extensive experience in the other two branches of government. She served as Chief of Staff to the Senate Majority Leader and gained extensive experience at the Capitol in Sacramento through her service as Counsel to both the Senate and Assembly Committees on Public Safety. Governor Gray Davis appointed Judge Armendariz as the first Ombudsman for women's prisons in California.

Judge Armendariz currently serves as a commissioner on the California Commission on Access to Justice and on the Committee to Review the Operations and Structure of the Commission on Judicial Performance. She has also volunteered her time as a commissioner to the Supreme Court Blue Ribbon Commission on Foster Care and as a Board Member of Leadership California, an organization dedicated to advancing the leadership role of women and girls. She is involved in many mentoring organizations and serves as an advisory board member to Latina Lawyers Bar Association, East Los Angeles Community College Pathway to Law, and Roosevelt High School Law and Public Service Magnet.

DEPARTING MEMBERS

Hon. Carin T. Fujisaki, Associate Justice, Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Three

Hon. Khymberli S. Apaloo, Judge, Superior Court of San Bernardino County

Hon. C. Todd Bottke, Judge, Superior Court of Tehama County

Hon. Kyle S. Brodie, Judge, Superior Court of San Bernardino County

Hon. Lisa M. Rogan, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of San Bernardino County

Mr. Maxwell V. Pritt, Attorney at Law, San Francisco

Mr. David H. Yamasaki, Court Executive Officer, Superior Court of Orange County