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Chief Justice Assigns Judges to Riverside Superior Court to Ease Criminal Backlog

Special Team of Judges to Start Work on August 13th

San Francisco—Chief Justice Ronald M. George today assigned a special team of 27 judges to help ease the heavy backlog of criminal cases in the Superior Court of Riverside County.

The judges will start their assignments on August 13 and will focus on serious felony cases, including a number of capital cases.

The plan to assign the judges was jointly announced last month by Chief Justice George, Riverside Superior Court Presiding Judge Richard T. Fields, and Riverside District Attorney Rod Pacheco. The cause of the court's backlog is the tremendous growth in population and caseload in Riverside County over the past 20 years and the lack of new judgeships to keep up with the increased caseload.

In addition to the special team of judges, Chief Justice George regularly assigns the equivalent of between 12 and 18 judges a month to the Superior Court of Riverside County to assist with its criminal backlog.

Chief Justice George has assigned the following judges to the Superior Court of Riverside County, from August 13 through November 30, 2007. Judges will serve in blocks of time ranging from 2 to 16 weeks, depending on the court's needs and the availability of the judge:

Judge Barbara Beck (retired), of the Superior Court of Santa Barbara County;

Judge J. Michael Beecher (retired), of the Superior Court of Orange County;

Judge Terrence R. Boren, of the Superior Court of Marin County;

Judge Charles W. Campbell, Jr., of the Superior Court of Ventura County;

(more)

Judge Patrick Canfield (retired), of the Superior Court of Inyo County;
Judge Ronald Combest (retired), of the Superior Court of Mendocino County;
Judge J. Richard Couzens (retired), of the Superior Court of Placer County;
Judge David F. De Alba, of the Superior Court of Sacramento County;
Judge Donal B. Donnelly, of the Superior Court of Imperial County;
Judge Raymond Edwards, Jr. (retired), of the Superior Court of San Diego County;
Judge Susan P. Finlay (retired), of the Superior Court of San Diego County;
Judge Stephen Graham, of the Superior Court of Marin County;
Judge Charles W. Hayden (retired), of the Superior Court of Santa Clara County;
Judge Rudolph Loncke (retired), of the Superior Court of Sacramento County;
Judge Rodney S. Melville, of the Superior Court of Santa Barbara County;
Judge Vernon Nakahara, of the Superior Court of Alameda County;
Judge Vincent J. O'Neill, Jr., of the Superior Court of Ventura County;
Judge Gregg L. Prickett, of the Superior Court of Orange County;
Judge James L. Quaschnick (retired), of the Superior Court of Fresno County;
Judge Roger D. Randall (retired), of the Superior Court of Kern County;
Judge Bernard E. Revak (retired), of the Superior Court of San Diego County;
Judge John J. Ryan (retired), of the Superior Court of Orange County;
Judge Philip V. Sarkisian (retired), of the Superior Court of Alameda County;
Judge Richard E. Spann (retired), of the Superior Court of Orange County;
Judge Eddie C. Sturgeon, of the Superior Court of San Diego County;
Judge Michael D. Wellington, of the Superior Court of San Diego County; and
Judge David S. Wesley, of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County.

The California Constitution grants the Chief Justice the authority to expedite judicial business and equalize the work of judges. The additional judicial assistance in Riverside will help promote public safety and maintain access to civil justice.

Justice Richard D. Huffman is working with justice system partners in Riverside County – including court officials, the District Attorney, Public Defender, Sheriff, Probation Office, and officials of the Riverside County Bar Association – to improve case processing procedures in the superior court. Justice Huffman serves on the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division One (San Diego) and is chair of the Judicial Council's Executive and Planning Committee.

The Chief Justice has also urged the Legislature to fund 50 new judgeships for statewide trial courts in each of these fiscal years: 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. During the last legislative session, the Governor and Legislature approved 50 new judgeships, of which 7 were allotted to Riverside County. Riverside is slated to receive another 7 of the next 50 judgeships requested by the Judicial Council of California, the administrative policymaking body for state courts chaired by the Chief Justice.

For more information on the Assigned Judges Program, see the California Courts Web site at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/documents/factsheets/Assigned_Judges_Program.pdf.

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