



SANTA ANA—Associate Justice David A. Thompson of the California Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division Three will retire from the court on October 15, 2021. “After 24 years on the bench, I am looking forward to returning to the private sector for the next chapter in my legal career,” Justice Thompson stated.

Justice Thompson served on the appellate court for 9 years and authored more than 700 opinions covering the full spectrum of civil, commercial, and criminal litigation. Previously, he served 15 years as a trial judge in the Orange County Superior Court where he presided over hundreds of civil trials and heard thousands of civil motions.

Associate Justice William Bedsworth remarked, “Justice Thompson has a rare combination of a hard-headed, straight-ahead approach to the law and a big heart that never lets him lose sight of the impact his decisions have on real people. He is a hard worker who challenges assumptions and thinks through every consequence.”

Associate Justice Eileen Moore commented, “Justice Thompson has been a wonderful colleague, always enthusiastic about collaborating in exploring issues. It is sad to see him depart our court. He will leave behind him many important and scholarly opinions.”

Mary-Christine (M.C.) Sungaila, chair of Buchalter’s firmwide appellate practice, noted, “As an Orange County bar leader and longtime advocate before this appellate court, I have appreciated firsthand Justice Thompson’s generosity with the appellate bar and his deeply thoughtful, probing, compassionate approach to cases. He has added so much to the law and the legal community. He will be missed as a Justice.”

Todd Lundell, an appellate specialist at Sheppard Mullin, observed, “Appearing before Justice Thompson at oral argument was always challenging in the best way. He has a unique ability to cut to the heart of any appeal and to recognize the implications of the court’s decision on the parties, the larger community, and the development of the law. Justice Thompson’s retirement leaves a hole on the court that will be difficult to fill.”

Prior to taking the bench, Justice Thompson was in private practice for 14 years. As a civil litigation attorney with Rutan & Tucker, he handled general business, construction defect, and real property related cases for companies and individuals. As a business transaction attorney with Morrison & Foerster, he represented clients acquiring, developing, financing, leasing, and selling commercial and residential real property.

Justice Thompson received his Juris Doctor from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1983 and his Bachelor of Science Degree in Finance from Georgetown University in 1980. An Orange County native, he grew up in Newport Beach.