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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Justice John G. Gabbert Historic Oral Argument and Lecture Series Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month**

*Commemorates 70th anniversary of California's school desegregation case and 50th anniversary of the creation of local appellate divisions*

RIVERSIDE—Presiding Justice Manuel A. Ramirez today announced that the [Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District](#), Division Two, will host the third Justice John G. Gabbert Historic Oral Argument and Lecture Series. The oral argument reenactment and lecture will commemorate the appeal to the federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, *Westminster School District of Orange County v. Mendez*—California's school desegregation case that preceded *Brown v. Board of Education* by seven years.

The event celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15), and commemorates the 70th anniversary of the *Mendez* petition filing and the 50th anniversary of the California Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District being divided into geographic Divisions One (San Diego) and Two (Riverside) by legislation.

“The heart of the *Mendez* lawsuit was five fathers and mothers who saw their children being denied access to the quality public education they had been promised as American citizens, and that was being delivered to their non-Hispanic neighbors,” commented Presiding Justice Ramirez. “They saw it as unfair and wrong, and that it was hurting their children. So because of the courage and resolve of those parents, California became the first state in this country to legally abolish segregation in public schools.”

### **Event Details**

**Where:** Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division Two  
3389 Twelfth Street Riverside, CA 92501

**When:** 3:00 p.m., Thursday, August 27, 2015

**Information/Reservations:** Paula Garcia, Assistant Clerk/Administrator, 951-782-2530

## **Event Overview**

The reenactment of the oral argument will be accompanied by historical, legal, and personal perspectives and followed by a reception and open house.

- Following introductory remarks by Presiding Justice Ramirez, constitutional law scholar Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean of the University of California, Irvine, School of Law, will give an overview and historical perspective of *Mendez* and discuss the relationship of the *Mendez* and *Brown* cases.
- Argument on behalf of the petitioning parents will be presented by Christian Buckley, a partner in the law firm of Buckley & Buckley, and by Christopher Arriola, Deputy District Attorney in the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office.
- Argument on behalf of the school districts will be reenacted by Scott Taylor, Deputy Attorney General of the Office of the California Attorney General, and by Kahn A. Scolnick, partner and general litigator in the law firm of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher.
- The decision will be presented by the Honorable Jesus G. Bernal, Judge of the United States District Court, Central District of California.
- Historical and personal perspectives will be presented by Ms. Janice Munemitsu, Mr. Gonzalo Mendez, Mr. Henry Ramirez, Mr. Michael Ramirez, and the Honorable Frederick P. Aguirre, Judge of the Superior Court of California, County of Orange.
- Presiding Justice Ramirez will then make closing remarks.
- Before and after the presentations, historical and artistic displays and informational videos will be presented at various locations within the courthouse
- After the courtroom presentations, a reception will be held in the library and courtyard.
- Tours of the courthouse will also be provided.

## **Additional Program Contributors and Supporters**

The John G. Gabbert family; Hillary Jenks, Ph.D., Director, Center for Social Justice and Civil Liberties; Amy Cardullo, CFRE, CSPG, Director, Riverside Community College District Foundation and Alumni Affairs; Chris Carlson, Chief of Staff, Riverside Community College District; Dr. Greta Nagel, President and Executive Director of the Museum of Teaching and Learning; and Ms. Sandy Simmons, Artist.

## **Case Citations**

- *Mendez v. Westminster School District of Orange County* (D. Cal. 1946) 64 F. Supp. 544
- *Westminster School District of Orange County v. Mendez* (9th Cir. Cal. 1947) 161 F.2d 774
- *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) 347 U.S. 483