



Superior Court of California

COUNTY OF VENTURA
Hall of Justice
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JUDGE MATTHEW GUASCO NAMED JUDGE OF THE YEAR

Judge Matthew P. Guasco has been named Judge of the Year (2020) by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association. The honor was bestowed at the association's 42nd annual Judges' Night dinner on May 11, 2022, at the Tower Club in Oxnard. This event was originally scheduled for March 2020 but was postponed until 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The award recognizes exceptional judicial performance balanced with courtesy and compassion toward litigants and attorneys. Honorees are selected by a committee comprised of a diverse group of trial lawyers from the civil and criminal arenas.

Prior to his appointment, Judge Guasco was a trial and appellate civil litigator, as well as a professional mediator and arbitrator, with over 26 years of experience in the legal profession. He was Of Counsel with Arnold, LaRochelle, Mathews, Van Conas and Zirbel, LLP, from 2008 to 2010, and he was Of Counsel with Norman Dowler, LLP, from 2001 to 2008. From 1998 to 2001, he was a sole practitioner focusing on ADR and criminal appellate practice. He was an associate attorney with Engle & Carobini, LLP from 1993 to 1998, and with Lascher & Lascher from 1989 to 1993. He began his legal career with the Marin County Public Defender's Office (1985 to 1989).

Judge Guasco is a past President of the Ventura County Bar Association. He has been an Adjunct Professor for Pepperdine University's Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution for many years. Judge Guasco is a member of the faculty of the Center for Judicial Education & Research of the Judicial Council. Judge Guasco is a graduate of the University of California, Davis, and Golden Gate University School of Law. He is currently assigned to Department 20 hearing Civil Trials, and Law & Motion.

Also honored at the event were Associate Appellate Justice Kenneth R. Yegan and Judge Rebecca S. Riley, Ret., who were selected as VCTLA's Portrait Honorees for 2020. Formal portraits of Associate Justice Yegan and Judge Riley were unveiled and presented to the court during the ceremony. VCTLA has annually selected one or more judges for the portrait honor since 1978.

Kenneth R. Yegan was appointed by former Governor Gerald Brown, Jr. on January 2, 1983, to fill the vacancy of Ventura Municipal Court Judge Melinda Johnson who was elevated to the Ventura Superior Court bench. As a trial court judge, Justice Yegan presided over criminal, civil and family law cases. In 1986, he was appointed by former Governor George Deukmejian, Jr. to the Ventura County Superior Court bench.

On December 27, 1990, Justice Yegan was appointed by former Governor Deukmejian to fill an Associate Justice position with the California Court of Appeal, Second District, Division Six.

Rebecca S. Riley was appointed to the Ventura County Municipal Court bench by former Governor Pete Wilson in November 1995 and elevated to the Superior Court by unification in June 1998. Judge Riley was named Judge of the Year in 2013 by VCTLA and received the Women Lawyers of Ventura County Legacy Award in 2015.

Judge Riley is a graduate of the University of Wyoming and the Ventura College of Law. Prior to her appointment to the bench, she was a deputy district attorney with the Ventura County District Attorney's Office for 10 years and practiced civil law for two years.

The portraits of Associate Justice Yegan and Judge Riley, and those of previous honorees, may be viewed in Courtroom 22 on the second floor of the Hall of Justice in Ventura.

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