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Hon. Mary Lou Byrne

Los Angeles Superior Court, Retired

Commissioner Byrne recently retired after almost 19 years on the Los Angeles Superior Court bench, where she presided over cases involving family law, criminal law, restraining orders, infractions, and unlawful detainers. She was known in the Pasadena Courthouse as the “most valuable player” for her ability to step into any assignment and handle any cases with her trademark warmth, efficiency, and compassion.

Practice Areas

Family Law, Civil Litigation of all kinds including personal injury, legal malpractice, real property, employment, business disputes, and eminent domain, Law and Motion including discovery disputes.

Conflict Resolution Experience

Commissioner Byrne began her career as a civil litigation associate, and later partner, at the firm of Nossaman LLP in Downtown Los Angeles. Even as a practitioner she was greatly interested in alternative dispute resolution, and she completed the Pepperdine University 40-hour mediation training program for the first time in 1999, just as the concept of mediation was taking hold in the legal community. She participated in dozens of successful mediations as a practitioner, involving subjects such as eminent domain, legal malpractice, real estate disputes, and governmental regulations such as the California Environmental Quality Act and actions arising from the Resolution Trust Corporation in connection with the savings and loan crisis in the late 20th century.

As a bench officer she put her mediation skills to work on the other side of things, settling cases in her own court as well as those assigned to other judicial officers. The subject matter, again, ranged from Family Law (all aspects including custody and visitation as well as financial matters), evictions, civil harassments, and criminal matters.

Education & Training

- J.D. University of Southern California Gould School of Law (1988)
- B.S. Pepperdine University (1983)

Organizations & Achievements

Commissioner Byrne instructed new judges at the Center for Judicial Education and Research in San Francisco, sharing her experience and insights with her new colleagues. She is a former member of the Family Standing Committee of the Los Angeles Superior Court, and received an appreciation award from the Family Law Section of the Pasadena Bar Association upon the conclusion of her work in Family Law for the Pasadena Court. She is a member of the Family Law Section of the California Lawyers Association, the Los Angeles County Bar Association, and the Pasadena Bar Association. Commissioner Byrne is a former instructor of legal research and writing at University of Southern California Gould School of Law.

Judge Byrne is available throughout California, nationally or internationally.