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Hon. Gary Y. Tanaka

Los Angeles County Superior Court, Retired

Judge Gary Y. Tanaka (Ret.) brings 17 years of distinguished judicial experience and a deep understanding of what drives successful case resolution. During his tenure on the Los Angeles Superior Court from 2009 to 2026, Judge Tanaka presided over more than 25,000 cases and over 250 jury and bench trials, developing a reputation as a thoughtful, prepared, and highly effective judicial officer. Judge Tanaka served in some of the busiest and most complex civil assignments, including presiding over a Personal Injury Hub trial court and an Independent Calendar Unlimited Jurisdiction Civil Court for the South Central and Southwest Districts.

Prior to his elevation to the bench, Judge Tanaka built a diverse legal background spanning both the private and public sectors. He began his career as a civil transactional attorney specializing in real estate, corporate transactions, finance, taxation, and estate planning, before serving the County of Los Angeles as a deputy public defender, deputy alternate public defender, and senior deputy county counsel.

Practice Areas

- Civil rights, municipal liability, personal injury, premises liability, employment, construction, malpractice, business, real estate, habitability, HOA, landlord-tenant and neighbor disputes, and probate estate disputes.

Conflict Resolution Experience

- Known for his exceptional settlement skills and practical approach to dispute resolution, Judge Tanaka was frequently sought out by attorneys and litigants to conduct both voluntary and mandatory settlement conferences. He brings a unique ability to evaluate cases from the perspective of a trial judge—assessing the evidence, identifying strengths and weaknesses, understanding witness credibility, and helping parties realistically evaluate risk. He understands that successful resolution requires more than identifying legal issues; it requires managing expectations, recognizing human factors, and helping parties make informed decisions based on the realities of litigation.

Education & Training

- J.D., Western State College of Law (1990)
- California State University, Long Beach

Organizations & Achievements

- Co-Chair, Los Angeles Superior Court Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee
- Recipient, Hon. William E. McFadden Award (South Bay Bar Association)

Judge Tanaka is available throughout California and nationally via Zoom.