

California State University, Fresno, TOP DOG Resume

James A. Ardaiz

Retired Administrative Presiding Justice, Fifth District Court of Appeal

Graduate: California State University, Fresno, B.A. English (1970)

University of California, Hastings College of Law (1974)

1974 Deputy District Attorney, County of Fresno. 1977-1980 Chief Deputy District Attorney, Homicide: one of the youngest lawyers in the State of California to achieve designation of Chief Deputy District Attorney. 1980, age 32, elected Municipal Court Judge, County of Fresno. Presiding Judge Municipal Court 1983-1985. At the age of 35, appointed to the Superior Court and became Presiding Criminal Judge (Deukmejian). At 39, nominated to the Fifth District Court of Appeal (Deukmejian) as one of the youngest appellate court judges in California history. At 44 designated Administrative Presiding Justice (Wilson), the youngest APJ in California history.

Member of the Judicial Council of California and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Judicial Council, the governing arm of the California judiciary. Chair of numerous committees addressing matters of statewide judicial policy. As chair of the Task Force on Trial Employees, he negotiated the new trial court personnel system for the state of California to secure state trial court funding for the judiciary described by Chief Justice Ron George as, "A monumental achievement."

Named California Jurist of the Year for the California Judiciary, Instructor at the California Judicial College in the field of Evidence, Sentencing and Trial Practice; two-time recipient of Professor of the Year in the field of evidence, Blaine Pettit Mentor Award; Chair of New Trial Judge Orientation and Education. Four-time recipient of the Kleps Award for Judicial Administration. Recipient Japanese American Citizen League Distinguished American Award; lecturer Robert Dole School of Public Policy, Lawrence, Kansas. Lecturer and consultant F.B.I, Quantico, Virginia. Served as pro tempore Justice on the California Supreme Court on multiple occasions. Principal strategic author, California Three Strikes Law. Formulated and created the Adult Offender Program, now a statewide model, resulting in significant changes in criminal punishment as an alternative to incarceration. Designed and led construction of the new Fifth District Court of Appeal described as a "stunning example of courthouse architecture."

Co-Author: California Evidence; Author: Hands Through Stone, Fractured Justice, Shades of Truth, Trading Innocence, and Tears of Honor (Silver Medal recipient, Historical Novel of the Year, National Association of Independent Publishers, 2022).

Retired 2011 and resumed the practice of law in the fields of mediation, arbitration and appellate evaluation becoming general counsel for a major Bay Area commercial and agricultural development entity. In 2016 he reentered the courtroom as a trial lawyer securing a \$25,000,000 verdict (Top 100 Verdicts in America 2016). Consulted on matters before the Supreme Court

resulting in changes in affidavits, Sweetwater School District, and Bolger v Amazon resulting in the application of products liability to Amazon on products sold to the public. In 2021 as lead counsel, with his co-counsel he secured a jury verdict of \$89,800,000 on behalf of Westlake Farms v Los Angeles Sanitation District.

In 2021 he retired from active law practice. Married for 52 years to the former Pamela Baxter (Class of 1969, Fresno State), he and his wife have three children and five grandchildren. They divide their time between Fresno and the Monterey coast where he writes and occupies his free time with oil painting, primarily portraits and landscapes.