

Accountable Language: The Power of Words and the Importance of Using Language That Treats All People With Dignity and Respect

Friday, October 21, 2022
3:15 – 4:30 PM



This course will explore the appropriate use of language in the context of gender including the care that must be employed in the use of language which could prejudice individuals appearing in the courts.

At the end of the session, participants will:

1. Understand how language impacts the outcomes in judicial opinion writing
2. Learn how a writer can weaponize language to achieve a desired result
3. Consider whether judges reverse engineer language for a desired outcome.
4. Explain why diversity on the bench is necessary to achieve a fair and just outcome.

Speakers:

Hon. Mary Pat Gunderson (retired), Judge, District Court in Polk County, Iowa



Mary Pat Gunderson was appointed in 2011 District Court Judge in Polk County, Iowa, where she presided over both criminal and civil jury and bench trials. Judge Gunderson served as Chair of the District's Law Clerk Hiring Committee and Co-Chair of the Polk County Bench Bar Committee. She has also held positions on both the Board of Directors for the Polk County Volunteer Lawyers Project and the Iowa Supreme Court Task Force on Family Law. In recognition of her courageous scholarship in support of women in the legal profession, the Iowa Association of Women Attorneys awarded Judge Gunderson the 2020 Arabella Mansfield Award.

Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Gunderson served as a Polk County Magistrate from 2005-2011. From 1989-1996, she was an Assistant Polk County Attorney, where she prosecuted over 25 felony jury trials including kidnapping and first-degree murder.

She graduated from the University of Iowa College of Law in Iowa City, Iowa, in 1988.

Upon retiring in 2017, Judge Gunderson co-founded the Iowa Center for Children's Justice. She currently splits her time between Des Moines, Iowa, and Ketchum, Idaho. The presentation she will give draws from her 2018 publication in the *Georgetown Journal of Gender and the Law* and subsequent legal developments. Since the article's publication, numerous organizations, including the Iowa

Supreme Court, the Utah Supreme Court, the National Association of Women Judges, and the Washington D.C. Bar Association, have asked Judge Gunderson to present her research on implicit gender bias in the judiciary.

Hon. Elizabeth A. White (retired), Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court



Elizabeth Allen White retired as a Judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court in July 2020 after serving 23 years on the court. She was assigned to serve as a Justice Pro Tem of the California Court of Appeal, 2d District from February – March 2004, and again in March – June 2020. Her judicial career started in the then Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1997, and she was elevated in 2000 upon unification. She joined JAMS in November 2020 as an arbitrator and mediator.

Judge White graduated from UCLA and obtained her Juris Doctorate from Loyola Law School in 1981. She presided in Department 48, an Independent Civil Calendar Court at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles. She served as Chair of the Judicial Education Seminars Civil Law Subcommittee from 2016 through her recent retirement. As such, she chaired a committee which developed judicial education for all civil judges in the County of Los Angeles. Prior to that she chaired the Civil Law Education Committee for the Judicial Council’s Judicial Education and Research Department. She has been a frequent lecturer for judicial education throughout the State of California, served as Adjunct Faculty at USC’s Gould School of Law’s LLM program where she taught Constitutional Law and Professional Responsibility. She also served as Adjunct Faculty at Loyola Law School where she taught Civil Discovery and as an Instructor for UCLA’s Paralegal Training Program.

She is the author of The Rutter Group’s *Paralegal Manual - Civil Procedure Before Trial* and co- author of the *Paralegal Manual – Civil Trials and Evidence* and the *Paralegal Manual – Personal Injury*. Judge White is the Vice President of Districts for the National Association of Women

Judges (“NAWJ”), an organization dedicated to promoting diversity on the bench, fostering collegiality, and providing quality education for judges. She also served as Chair of NAWJ’s 2019 Conference in Los Angeles, and Chair of District 14 which encompasses both California and Nevada. She will serve as NAWJ’S President Elect in October 2020 – October 2021.

Judge White lived in France and is fluent in both French and Spanish.