

Honorable Pennie K. McLaughlin Bio

Appointed as a Commissioner in January of 2004 by the San Diego County Superior Court Presiding Judge and Executive Committee, Commissioner McLaughlin currently presides over a busy family support court, where many litigants appear without legal representation. Her past assignments include other high volume courts, including misdemeanor arraignments, felony drug court, traffic, small claims and unlawful detainers. Commissioner McLaughlin has a keen awareness of the hardships faced by many of the litigants who come before her on a daily basis. As a new lawyer and graduate of Boston University School of Law, Ms. McLaughlin traveled across the country to become a deputy public defender in one of the largest and finest offices in the United States. She was determined to seek justice on behalf of indigent defendants and spent 13 years doing this work.

After handling virtually every type of criminal case, Commissioner McLaughlin served for four years as an Assistant United States Attorney in San Diego, and was known as a prosecutor with a honed sense of justice, fairness and equity. Commissioner McLaughlin has always been active in her community and served as her local community's governing body's president for many years. During this time, she also edited the community newsletter and transformed it into a publication that went to every household in the neighborhood and included articles on restaurants, shops, residents and opportunities to become involved. This community, Bird Rock, La Jolla, was transformed in these years by a very active group of citizens who collectively made the difference working together.

Through the NAWJ, Commissioner McLaughlin is currently serving as the Projects Chair for the Board and believes that the NAWJ can have a much larger presence in legal communities in every state through the wonderful projects that help lift up the lives of many. She has started several programs in the San Diego community along with many others, and was honored by the San Diego County Bar Association in 2020 as the Service Award recipient.

On a personal note, Commissioner McLaughlin is the parent of a daughter currently studying at Notre Dame Law School, and two stepchildren who are now adults and living in Northern CA. Cooking and baking make up a large part of her down time, along with trail running to train for her next ultra- marathon.