



June Newsletter and District 14 Report  
Submitted by Judge Pennie K. McLaughlin

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## **1. APPOINTMENTS AND HONORS**

### **NAWJ DISTRICT 14 MEMBER SARA KIRBY APPOINTED AS A SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE IN SAN DIEGO**



Congratulations to Judge Sara Kirby who has been a valuable member of San Diego’s Family Court bench in the North County courthouse for over a year. Judge Kirby was appointed as a commissioner in 2022, after serving 10 years as a legal research attorney specializing in family law for the court.

### **FORMER CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE HONORED AT THE EQUAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE GALA**

Congratulations to former Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye, who was this year’s recipient of the “Ramey Award for Gender Justice,” named for National Feminist Activist, Dr. Estelle Ramey, and her daughter, Drucilla Ramey. Drucilla Ramey is well known for her passionate and persistent work in

advocating for women and minority rights.



Former Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye

Chief Cantil-Sakauye was well known for raising awareness of the unfair financial impact of fines, fees, and the bail system on the poor. She also sought to advance bail system reform that would address concerns about fairness and public safety. She has been recognized for her early work on domestic violence issues, support for minority bar associations, and advancing the role of women and minorities in the legal profession. She helped revitalize civic learning as chief justice through her Power of Democracy initiative. California was fortunate to have the leadership of Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye for 12 years before retiring to serve as the President of a non-profit policy institute in the state.

**NAWJ DISTRICT 14 MEMBER JUDGE WENDY BEHAN HONORED BY SAN DIEGO LAWYER'S CLUB FOR HER OUTSTANDING WORK AND LEADERSHIP IN THE SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY**

Judge Behan was honored in front of crowd of over 600 members of the San Diego legal community at a ceremony recently. She received the "Belva Lockwood Award," which was established in 1985 to recognize members whose contributions to the organization are outstanding. The award is named for Belva Anne Lockwood (1830-1917), who devoted her life to improving the social, economic, and political status of women and to advocating equality for all.



## **2. DISTRICT 14 MEMBERS CONTINUE THEIR WORK ON PANELS AND COMMITTEES**

**NAWJ MEMBER MARIA PUENTE PORRAS, JUDGE, LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT, CONTINUES TO SERVE THE LOS ANGELES LEGAL COMMUNITY, PARTICIPATING IN A SEMINAR ON CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN FAMILY LAW**

Judge Puente-Porras was one of five authors of a full-page spread of articles on cultural awareness in California's statewide legal newspaper. Her energy and time expended in serving the local legal community is impressive. In any given year, Judge Puente-Porras is serving on lunch time

panels, weekend panels, some statewide and others for the enormous county in which she sits.



Her article, recently published on July 26<sup>th</sup>, was titled “Maintaining Cultural Awareness for Partners of Justice.” Keep up the great work Maria!

**ENSURING RACIAL EQUITY IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM COMMITTEE CHAIRS  
BRING AN INCREDIBLE PROGRAM ON JURY SELECTION TO NAWJ**

San Diego Superior Court Judges Nadia Keilani and Sherry Thompson-Taylor head up the NAWJ Enduring Racial Equity in the Justice System Committee.



Judge Nadia Keilani



Judge Sherry Thompson-Taylor

They have been very active with webinars in June and early July, and again this past week. This latest program was entitled: “Jury Selection: Invisible Barriers.” The speakers were well-versed in jury selection issues, but one speaker in particular told a compelling tale of being cast out of the jury pool on account of her skin color and the section of town she called home. Please click on the link below to hear the entire discussion. Congratulations to Judges Keilani and Thompson-Taylor for teaming up one of the most active committees of the NAWJ.

<https://www.nawj.org/past-webinars/jury-selection-invisible-barriers>

## **JUDGE MARGUERITE D. DOWNING, LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT, CONTINUES TO LEAD IN THE NATIONAL ARENA OF JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUSTICE**

Judge Marguerite D. Downing (LA Superior Court) served as a presenter at the National Council of juvenile and Family Court Judges. (NCJFCJ). Their 86<sup>th</sup> Annual conference was held in Baltimore, Maryland, July 16 – 19<sup>th</sup>. Judge Downing presented on a panel entitled, “The Challenges of Communicating: How Generational Differences Influence Communication.” This panel was inspired by a panel Marguerite attended at a past NAWJ conference. She re-envisioned the panel to address communication issues and biases in the juvenile and family law proceedings.



Judge Downing third from left, with her co-presenters

**JUDGE ANN BREEN-GRECO CONTINUES TO CONTRIBUTE HER TIME AND EFFORTS  
TO PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY**



Judge Ann Breen-Greco moderated the NAWJ PRIDE program on June 30. There were over 100 registrants. Speakers included members of the NAWJ LGBTQ Committee as well as the Human Rights Campaign and Equality Florida.