



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

PRESS RELEASE

TO: ALL INFORMATION MEDIA – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ASSIGNMENT CHANGES IN THE SUPERIOR COURT

There are several judicial assignment changes in the Santa Barbara County Superior Court for 2009. **Judge Arthur A. Garcia** has taken over the duties of Presiding Judge for calendar years 2009 and 2010. He replaces outgoing Presiding Judge, J. William McLafferty, who served in this position in 2007 and 2008. Judge Garcia sits in the Santa Maria Division of the Court and hears civil trials and calendars. As Presiding Judge, he has the overall responsibility for judicial assignments and various administrative matters on a countywide basis. The Superior Court has a total of 19 judges and 5 commissioners who sit in several locations within Santa Barbara County.

Judge Brian Hill is the new Assistant Presiding Judge for 2009 and 2010. He replaces Judge Garcia who served in that capacity for the past two years. Judge Hill sits in the Santa Barbara Division of the Court and hears criminal trials and calendars. He will continue to be the Supervising Judge of the Santa Barbara Criminal Division.

The Superior Court has three new judges. **Judge Jed Beebe** was elected to office effective January 5, 2009 to fill a seat vacated by Judge Hall who retired in 2006. Judge Beebe will be assigned to hear criminal trials and calendars in Santa Maria.

Judge Jean Dandona was appointed by the Governor in November 2008 to fill the seat vacated by Judge Joseph Lodge. Judge Lodge passed away last year. Judge Dandona will handle criminal trials and calendars in Santa Barbara.

Judge Kay Kuns was also appointed by the Governor in November 2008 to fill another vacant seat due to Judge Melville's retirement in 2007. Judge Kuns will be assigned to the Lompoc Division and hear a variety of matters including criminal trials and calendars.

Presiding Judge Art Garcia remarked: *"I am very pleased that the court is so fortunate to have three new judges who are all such outstanding individuals. They will be fine jurists and are a welcome addition to our court."*

Several other assignment changes were announced today by Judge Garcia. **Judge James Iwasko** will be moving over from the Lompoc Division to hear criminal trials and calendars in Santa Maria. Judge Iwasko had been handling the Lompoc Division for several years including criminal matters and the Drug Court calendar.

Judge James Rigali is being re-assigned from the Santa Maria Criminal Division to the Santa Maria Civil Division in which he will hear civil trials and calendars.