

Pauline Maxwell
Presiding Judge



Darrel E. Parker
Court Executive Officer

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 15, 2023

HOLLY BENTON SWORN IN AS SANTA BARBARA COUNTY CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

Santa Barbara, California, March 15, 2023 –

The Superior Court of California, County of Santa Barbara, Presiding Judge Pauline Maxwell announces the selection of Holly Benton as the next Chief Probation Officer for the County of Santa Barbara. With over 33 years of experience in probation, in both San Bernardino and Santa Barbara Counties, Ms. Benton will succeed Chief Tanja Heitman who has served with distinction and recently taken a new leadership position with the County effective March 20, 2023.

Ms. Benton earned her bachelor's degree from the University of LaVerne in 1989 and her master's degree in public administration from California State University San Bernardino in 2012. Since 2018 she has served as Chief Deputy Probation Officer of Santa Barbara County, most recently responsible for the Adult Division. From 2018 – 2021 Ms. Benton was responsible for the county's Juvenile Division. Ms. Benton had notable experience in chairing the Community Corrections Partnership Working Group with responsibility for collaboratively developing the County's Public Safety Realignment Plan.

Prior to her time with Santa Barbara County Ms. Benton served in San Bernardino County's Probation Department from 1990 – 2018 with a wide variety of increasingly responsible positions giving her experience in every aspect of the field of probation. Additionally, from 2016 – 2018 she served as an adjunct instructor at California State University San Bernardino teaching *Domestic Violence and the Criminal Justice System* and *Community Corrections*.

Ms. Benton was selected following a recruitment conducted by the Superior Court in concert with Santa Barbara County and unanimously selected by the judges of the Superior Court following nomination by the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission. Judge Maxwell noted that "*Holly is recognized as a collaborative leader in the probation department with outstanding experience gained over more than 30 years that will serve the Santa Barbara County Community very well. The Court is looking forward to working with her.*" Upon being notified of her appointment Ms. Benton said, "*I am humbled and honored by the Court's decision and this appointment. It is an important position in our criminal justice system, and I am dedicated to serving this community to the best of my ability.*"

