



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

**MICHAEL G. BOWMAN**  
PRESIDING JUDGE  
DEPARTMENT 47

720 NINTH STREET  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814  
(916) 874-5487

June 29, 2023

**VIA E-MAIL**

Hon. Keith D. Davis, Chair  
Subcommittee on Courthouse Names  
Court Facilities Advisory Committee  
[kddavis@sb-courts.org](mailto:kddavis@sb-courts.org)

Re: Courthouse Naming Policy

Dear Judge Davis:

I write to you pursuant to the process set forth in the Judicial Council's Courthouse Naming Policy to request a name for the new courthouse under construction in downtown Sacramento. We respectfully request that our new courthouse be named "Superior Court of California, Sacramento County, Downtown Courthouse."

We do not take this step lightly. We come to our recommendation after months of consideration, robust discussion, and constructive debate. Ultimately, we reached a consensus as a bench that the best approach to serving the people of Sacramento County is one that reflects the highest values of the judicial branch itself: a commitment to independence, neutrality, and the public's access to justice. We believe that a generic name that references only the court's location best exemplifies those ideals. Such a name would remain unaffiliated with any particular person and, more importantly, the perspectives or causes that public sentiment may attach to a particular person, no matter how esteemed or noble they may be. A name that references our court's location carries a simple, but profound message: that the public we serve comes first, and it is their access to our courthouse that we prioritize over the achievements of our colleagues in the legal or political arena. We of course differ from our two sister branches of government in that we are not political; our proposed name reflects our commitment to remain so. Our mission is to serve everyone equally under the law, regardless of political affiliation or any other characteristic. In this regard, it is the public's courthouse, and we wish to put them first.

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We are aware that changes to the Courthouse Naming Policy are under discussion, and we appreciate that, if approved by the Judicial Council, those changes would provide greater leeway to name new courthouses after individuals. We ourselves considered such an approach and note that there are many deserving candidates with deep ties to Sacramento County who merited our serious consideration. Indeed, if we were to propose that our new courthouse be named after an individual, a majority of our Judges support naming it after our former Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, Tani Cantil-Sakauye. Born in Sacramento where she resides to this day, the former Chief Justice served on the Sacramento County Superior Court and the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, based in Sacramento, before her elevation to the California Supreme Court. Her accomplishments, spanning more than thirty years in the judiciary, and all that she and her family overcame to achieve them, are well-known to all of us here in Sacramento and throughout the Judicial Council and, indeed, the State of California. She, without doubt, warrants the most serious consideration for this honor, particularly in light of the proposed changes to the Courthouse Naming Policy that provide an avenue for new courthouses to be named after living persons.

However, despite her achievements and all the support she continues to enjoy from our bench, we nonetheless believe that the highest ideal for our new courthouse is to remain unaffiliated with any particular person, however worthy she may be. The independence that is essential to the judicial branch is best served by this approach. It is the fair, equal and consistent application of law that must be our focus, not the identity of any particular jurist. The name of our new courthouse should reflect this enduring commitment.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide our request to this subcommittee, and will take this moment to again thank the Judicial Council for the new downtown courthouse that is taking shape to be finished next year. We look forward to the significant step forward it will represent in service to our Sacramento community and express our deepest appreciation for your support.

Sincerely,



Michael G. Bowman  
Presiding Judge

cc: Hon. Brad R. Hill