



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

NEWS RELEASE

FROM: Honorable Russell L. Hom
Presiding Judge

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Sacramento Superior Court's Community Engagement and Fairness Committee

In response to the racial injustice and inequalities across our nation, Presiding Judge Russell L. Hom has established a new community outreach committee with the task of ensuring the elimination of bias within our courtrooms. Under the leadership of Judge Emily E. Vasquez and Judge Laurie M. Earl, the Sacramento Superior Court's Community Engagement and Fairness Committee ("Committee") is composed of a diverse group of members of our community, including local community leaders, members of the bar, judiciary, and court administration. Presiding Judge Hom expressed his expectation that "this community outreach Committee will promote our mission of providing equal access to justice for all regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability or socio-economic status."

The Committee held its inaugural meeting on April 23, 2021 wherein its steering committee members composed of: **Rudolph R. Loncke (Barry)**, *retired* Sacramento Superior Court Judge; **Trevor Carson**, Sacramento County Bar President; **Yoshinori H. T. Himel (Toso)**, *former* Assistant United States Attorney and U.C. Davis Law School Instructor/Lecturer; **Andi Mudryk**, Chief Deputy Director of the California State Department of Rehabilitation; **Amagda Pérez**, Executive Director of California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation and Co- Director of the U.C. Davis Immigration Law Clinic; and **Tamara Gates-Watson**, Chaplin at Sutter Center for Psychiatry, all committed to ensuring a justice system that treats everyone fairly and impartially with the same equal access and the same equal justice.

The Committee will be expanded to include other members of the Sacramento community to join its efforts and to sponsor and support educational programs and critical conversations designed to recognize and eliminate bias. We recognize that the lack of financial, personal, or systemic support as well as our own conscious and unconscious biases leads to inequities within our court system. "It is incumbent upon us as judicial officers to support equality, promote a fair and just system of justice and to develop a greater awareness of the challenges faced by our court users to sustain an equitable system of justice for all," proclaimed Judge Emily Vasquez.

In describing the aim of the committee, Judge Laurie Earl said: “This Committee strives to engage with members of our community to better understand the barriers to access to justice and to cultivate a justice system that works fairly for all of our court users.”

In recognizing the need to form this Committee, the Sacramento Superior Court supports and adopts the California Supreme Court’s Statement on Equality and Inclusion which, in part, reads:

We state clearly and without equivocation that we condemn racism in all its forms: conscious, unconscious, institutional, structural, historic and continuing. We say this as persons who believe all members of humanity deserve equal respect and dignity; as citizens committed to building a more perfect Union; and as leaders of an institution whose fundamental mission is to ensure equal justice under the law for every single person.