

3/6/2024 Bench Bar Meeting Notes (Presiding Judge Cogliati)

Trial Update

--Jury trials in the civil departments are proceeding and are being set in 2024

--Court trials are also available. They are easier to set and can be done more quickly than jury trials

Judicial Mediations

--Also going well. Judge Volkmann and Judge Schmal are handling up to 12 per month. At the case management conference, attorneys can ask for mediation if that would be helpful

Court and Technology

--Upgrades to all the court room are complete

--Parties can appear at CMC and conferences via Zoom

Florence Patton (Director of Operation) announcements

--Amy Henderson has returned to Superior Court as the Probate Attorney

--Tim Newman, the previous director of criminal and traffic operations, has left the court to work as the CEO of the Court in San Benito County

--A new manager position was created and Kim Kildsig-DiBiasi is the new manager for the civil operations

--As of March 1, 2024, the Court has stopped emailing out the initial case management conference schedule notice. Attorneys can just check for the documents on the Portal.

Judicial Assignments

--Judge Volkmann is retiring effective May 1st but his last day will be March 29th. Judge Cogliati thanks Judge Volkmann for his 16 years of service on the bench.

Starting in April:

--Judge Cogliati will go to Dept 5

--Judge Schmal will stay in Dept 10

--Judge de la Pena will go to Dept 6

--Judge Sayar will go to Dept 4

--a visiting judge will be covering Dept 2 (criminal) for several months until a new Judge is appointed

State Budget

--There is a huge shortfall

--We don't know how it will affect the court's budget and operations. May have more info in May

--There may be tough times ahead court's budget and we should know more by the next Bench Bar meeting

Mock Trial

--Judge Cogliati thanks the legal community for their assistance as scorers, judges, and teachers. The Mock Trial Finals were very competitive and each team received the same number of points from the scorers. Judge Cogliati was ultimately required to vote and declare the winner.

Cookie Court for younger students, put on by the Trial Lawyers Association, is another great program. If anyone wants to get involved they can email scctla@gmail.com

Law Library Update from Sasha Morgan

--In Santa Cruz, the Law Library has a partnership with the Court. This unusual system has helped fund the law library

--The emergency funding from the state (last three years) has ended

--Renee Fleming continues to manage the Law Library. Any questions about supporting the Law Library can be directed to her

--Law library hours remain reduced due to budget, staff, and safety concerns.

Next Meeting is June 5, 2024