



Superior Court of California County of Orange ***News Release***

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Judges Elect Hon. Sheila F. Hanson as Presiding Judge and Hon. Terri K. Flynn-Peister as Assistant Presiding Judge

Santa Ana, Calif. – Hon. Sheila F. Hanson was elected Presiding Judge, and Hon. Terri K. Flynn-Peister Assistant Presiding Judge in an uncontested election for the two top posts of the Superior Court of California, County of Orange. Both Judge Hanson and Judge Flynn-Peister will begin their two-year terms on January 1, 2026.

The Orange County Superior Court serves the third most populous county in the State and the sixth largest county nationwide. The Court has jurisdiction over the County of Orange, which is home to approximately 3.2 million residents. This fiscal year, there are 156 courtrooms and 6 virtual courtrooms operating with 145 authorized judicial positions, 1,505 authorized employees and an annual budget of \$275.1 million.



Judge Hanson was elected to the Orange County Superior Court on November 7, 2006. While waiting to take office in January 2007, Judge Hanson was appointed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger enabling her to assume her duties on December 13, 2006.

She currently serves as the Assistant Presiding Judge of the Orange County Superior Court, a role she assumed in the beginning of 2025.

"I am honored to have been entrusted by my colleagues with the responsibility of serving as Presiding Judge and remain committed to ensuring fair and timely access to justice for all members of our community." said Judge Hanson, regarding her election to the top post of the Orange County Superior Court.

Judge Hanson presided over a long cause criminal jury trial calendar on the Felony Trial Panel from 2018 to 2025. She served as Supervising Judge of the Felony Panel from 2016 to 2018 and as Supervising Judge of the North Justice Center from January 2009 to February 2012.

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Judge Hanson serves as Chair of the Finance Committee and previously led the court's technology innovation efforts. She also served on the Executive committee and many other court committees. In addition, Judge Hanson serves as the Chair of the Information Technology Advisory Committee to the California Judicial Council. She assumed that role in 2016. She also previously served on the Executive Committee of the California Judges Association 2013-2016.

Prior to joining the court, Judge Hanson served as an Orange County Deputy District Attorney for nearly 18 years. Judge Hanson received her law degree from Western State University College of Law-Fullerton in 1989.

In addition, Judge Hanson previously served as adjunct Professor at Western State University College of Law. She is the recipient of the Inaugural Award for Excellence in Leadership by the North Orange County Bar Association in December 2011, the Community Pillar Award by the Iranian American Bar Association of Orange County and was inducted into the Western State University College of Law Hall of Fame on May 15, 2010.



Judge Flynn-Peister was appointed to the bench in 2012 by Governor Brown. She is currently the Supervising Judge of the Felony Panel and served on that panel for four years prior.

She previously served as the Supervising Judge of the West Justice Center from 2018 to 2020 and was assigned there from 2013 to 2020 handling a variety of criminal matters.

"It is a privilege and an honor to be able to serve the people of Orange County and the Orange County Superior Court in this capacity," said Judge Flynn-Peister, adding, "I am committed to continuing to provide the high-quality services of the Court and access to justice to all members of our community."

Judge Flynn-Peister also served as the Assistant Presiding Judge of the Appellate Division of the Orange County Superior Court from 2019 to 2021. Judge Flynn-Peister serves on many of the court's important committees, including the Executive Committee, the Finance Committee, and Technology Committee, as well as oversees the court's Pretrial Assessment and Release Services Program. She was an Assistant United States Attorney for almost twelve years in both the Central District of California, Santa Ana Branch Office, and in the Southern District of California, San Diego Office, before her appointment to the bench. She previously worked as an associate at Latham & Watkins.

Judge Flynn-Peister is a graduate of the University of California, San Diego and Tulane University School of Law where she graduated magna cum laude, Order of the Coif, and was a member and notes and comment editor of the Tulane Law Review.

Judge Flynn-Peister regularly speaks and gives presentations on evidence, criminal law updates, ethics, civility, and other areas of the law, as well as teaching the mandatory judicial ethics course for judges across the state. She also previously served as an adjunct professor at Cal State University, Fullerton, Whittier Law School, and Western State University College of Law.

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