

Retired judge leads Signature Resolution's San Francisco push

By James Twomey

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A former presiding judge of the San Francisco Superior Court, who was on the bench for nearly 20 years, has joined Signature Resolution, saying it was “time to move on.”

Signature Resolution announced that retired judge Anne-Christine Massullo would lead its expansion into San Francisco.

Massullo was presiding judge of the San Francisco Superior Court for two years from October 2022. She spent 18 years on the bench before retiring on Tuesday, with her first day at Signature on Wednesday.

In a phone interview with the Daily Journal, Massullo said the timing was right and that it wouldn't have been fair to complex litigants for her to wait to step down at the 20-year mark, when she could be half-way through some cases.

“The complex cases take a lot of management. ... It's important for the judge to know the case and the attorneys to know the judge. So, there's this relationship in complex cases that is really important and it's important to have judges in that assignment for three to five years. And I couldn't commit to that.”

Massullo said the courts are “overstretched” and alternative resolution is “a very important industry because of the increasing demands on the city and judiciary.”



Anne-Christine Massullo | Daily Journal Photo

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— Anne-Christine Massullo

“There are a lot of unfunded mandates that the Legislature puts out and judges are being asked to do more,” Massullo said. “So having the ability to look at a case and spend one or two days, or more, if necessary, with the attorneys and the clients is a real luxury. I'm looking forward to it because you're crunched for time as a judge. You can only do so much. So, it will be very different, and I welcome the change.”

Massullo said she would focus on complex cases in her new role and hopes to work on trust, business, trade secrets, anti-trust, water and family law cases.

Founded in 2017, Signature Resolution has offices in Los Angeles, Century City, San Diego and Oakland.

“We are thrilled to have Judge Massullo join Signature Resolution as a foundation of our San Francisco office,” Dario Higuchi, Signature Resolution founding partner, said in a news release. “We are proud to have attracted another former presiding judge of such a significant courthouse to our panel of neutrals. Her experience and leadership skills will be invaluable in assisting her in resolving disputes. Her name recognition and identification with the local bar will enable her to hit the ground running.”

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