

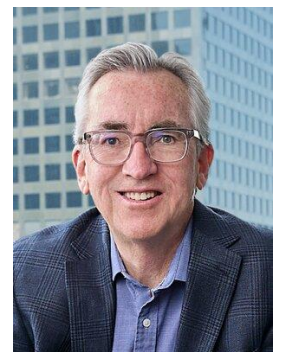
Ex-Calif. Appeals Court Leader Joins Signature Resolution

By James Mills

Law360 (March 11, 2025, 10:28 AM EDT) -- The alternative dispute resolution service Signature Resolution is bringing in a recently retired California Court of Appeal presiding justice to join its panel of neutrals.

Justice Brian S. Currey, who retired on Feb. 28, joined the service after 10 years on the bench, Signature Resolution announced Monday. He was on the California Court of Appeal, Second District, for six years, the final two as presiding justice. Before that, he was on the Los Angeles County Superior Court bench for four years.

He will work out of the downtown Los Angeles office, but will also handle virtual cases as well.



Justice Brian S. Currey

In a Monday interview, Justice Currey told Law360 he wasn't ready to retire completely, so he decided to become a neutral. He talked with several alternative dispute resolution services before making up his mind.

"Signature seems to clearly be the best fit for me," Justice Currey said. "They have momentum in their favor. They are attracting some really high-quality former judges who are friends and who I respect, people like Dan Buckley, who I have worked with for years. He was a big influence on my choice."

Justice Currey expects to handle any number of complex litigation cases.

"I spent 30 years at a major law firm [O'Melveny & Myers], doing large, complex cases. I spent time at the Superior Court as a trial judge and ended my Superior Court career at the complex court. I think complicated civil litigation would be a good place for me," Justice Currey said. "I understand that from the lawyer's point of view. I understand that from the judge's point of view. And it interests me. So that would be a trifecta."

He also expects to get business conflicts, class actions, environmental litigation, employment disputes and professional malpractice claims.

"On the trial court and on the Court of Appeal, I worked on an enormous variety of cases. Every type of case that can be brought in a state court, pretty much I worked on," Justice Currey said.

Signature Resolution was founded in 2017 and has six California offices: downtown Los Angeles, Century

City, San Diego, Oakland, San Jose and San Francisco, plus virtual services.

"We are honored to welcome Justice Currey to Signature Resolution," Dario Higuchi, Signature Resolution founding partner and managing member, said in a statement. "With a distinguished career as a BigLaw trial lawyer, trial judge and justice on the Court of Appeal, Justice Currey offers a wealth of experience to our team. His diverse background provides him with a unique perspective on case evaluation and outcomes, which will undoubtedly be invaluable in helping parties resolve their disputes."

Justice Currey, who grew up in Southern California, earned his law degree in 1981 from the University of Virginia School of Law after earning his bachelor's degree from the University of California, Davis.

He joined O'Melveny & Myers LLP soon after law school, becoming a partner in 1989 and serving as vice chair of the firm's litigation department. He handled business litigation, environmental litigation and mass injury cases, including the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska and the 1991 Cantara Loop/Sacramento River train derailment and toxic chemical spill. He also handled the product liability case for the arthritis drug Vioxx.

In 2010, he was recruited to work as counsel to Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, serving in that position for almost three years. His final year in LA City Hall was then spent as deputy mayor for economic and business policy, overseeing major infrastructure and regulatory matters.

In 2013, when Villaraigosa's term ended, Justice Currey returned to O'Melveny for a year, then was appointed to the Los Angeles County Superior Court by Gov. Jerry Brown. Brown then appointed him to the state Court of Appeal in 2018. In 2023, Gov. Gavin Newsom elevated him to presiding judge.

Justice Currey enjoyed his time on the bench, saying: "When you've got a good lawyer in front of you, it's a terrific experience. It's fun. It's exhilarating. It's rewarding."

He found the courtroom experience different from the bench.

"Your view from the bench is very different than your view from counsel table. I think you're able to see the bigger picture," Justice Currey said. "The jury looks up to the judge and has a real bonding experience with the judge. I felt like I understood what the jury was doing better as a judge than I did as a lawyer, what the puzzled looks meant, what the bored looks meant. I thought I could read a jury better as a judge than as a lawyer."

Now that he's stepped down from the bench, he's ready for a new experience as a neutral.

"I get what the lawyers' needs are and what the clients' needs are in mediation," he said. "I'm just going to do my best to satisfy those."

--Editing by Robert Rudinger.