

Murchison & Cumming Personal Injury Atty To Join Signature

By James Mills

Law360 (June 3, 2025, 10:09 AM EDT) -- The alternative dispute resolution service Signature Resolution is bringing in a soon-to-retire Murchison & Cumming LLP personal injury trial attorney to join its panel of neutrals.

Litigator Scott L. Hengesbach, known for defending toxic tort cases and all kinds of personal injury cases, is scheduled to officially retire from Murchison & Cumming on June 15 after 34 years at the firm. He will move over to Signature shortly after that, the mediation service announced Monday.

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

In a Monday interview, Hengesbach told Law360 Pulse that he has known for years that when he retired from litigation, he would become a neutral.

"I've long contemplated making the transition from being a litigator and trial attorney into mediation," Hengesbach said.

"Although I am a pretty hardcore competitor," he said, "in a variety of different aspects of my life, I've always been the one who is trying to mend fences among friends who were having issues between them, managing familiar conflicts. I've long had it in my mind that I would make this transition. And now seemed like an appropriate time."

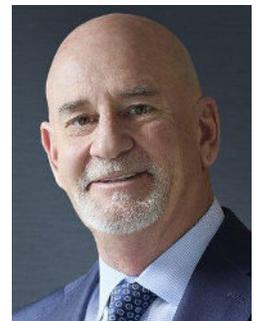
Hengesbach said he felt he had reached a good stopping point for his litigation career.

"I think what I set out to accomplish as a litigator, I've accomplished," he said. "I've done all of the things I wanted to do. I tried cases against some good lawyers, and I think I've gotten my fill of that."

He views going into mediation as both a "a natural progression" of his legal career and "a new challenge," saying, "I'm very much looking forward to it."

Hengesbach chatted with several people about going into mediation, including his onetime courtroom adversary turned friend Lars Johnson, who has been at Signature for the past seven years.

"I reached out to [Johnson] when I was thinking about this transition. He was very enthusiastic about my



Scott L. Hengesbach

prospects as a mediator, of which I was very appreciative," Hengesbach said. "Signature has a fantastic reputation."

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 and an affiliated service in Bakersfield.

"Scott brings a rare combination of deep legal knowledge, scientific expertise and human-centered problem-solving to our panel," Dario Higuchi, Signature Resolution founding partner and managing member, said in a statement. "His reputation for fairness, strategic thinking and credibility has earned him the respect of both sides of the bar. We're proud to welcome him and confident he will be an exceptional resource for parties seeking resolution."

Hengesbach was born in Pennsylvania, but grew up in Claremont, California, 30 miles east of Los Angeles. He knew by seventh grade that he wanted to be a lawyer and be in the courtroom. His love of debate pushed him toward being a trial attorney.

He earned his law degree in 1989 at the University of the Pacific's McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento after earning his bachelor's degree at the University of Redlands. Hengesbach then joined Murchison & Cumming, eventually heading up its toxic tort and environmental law practice.

Early in his career, he worked on pharmaceutical litigation. Soon after that, there was a strong uptick in toxic tort cases, so he moved over to handle those. Later, his practice broadened to include many different types of personal injury cases. Most recently, he has been working on traumatic brain injury cases, he said.

Hengesbach expects to continue dealing with personal injury as a mediator, saying, "I'm going to handle personal injury cases of all varieties."

Throughout his legal career, Hengesbach has enjoyed viewing the cases he's handles as "puzzles" to be solved. He's looking forward to the different types of puzzles that will come his way at Signature.

"I've long said that the great thing about my job is that I get good puzzles to work on," he said. "I'm looking at mediation as very much a natural extension of that same mindset. Instead of getting puzzles as I have for the past 35-some-odd years that I'm going to work on for a year or two or three or longer, now I'm going to get puzzles that I'm going to deal with on a daily basis. So, I'm going to see a lot more variety and I'm going to have to digest and solve those puzzles in a much more rapid fashion. I look at it as another opportunity to put together and solve good puzzles."

--Editing by Robert Rudinger.