Mediator Jonathan Cannon places an emphasis on candor, honesty

By Henry Meier
Daily Journal Staff Writer

ORANGE — There isn’t a single formula that will resolve all disputes before him. But with trust and honesty as parts of the process, cases are more likely to end in settlement, according to JAMS mediator Jonathan H. Cannon.

**ADR Profile**

“[Parties] have to trust me, to be honest with me,” he said. “If you can be upfront and honest sooner rather than later, it’s better for everyone. Tell me the facts, tell me the legal issues and tell me what the law is concerning those issues.”

Attorneys who have used Cannon as a neutral said the former Orange County Superior Court judge makes exercising trust and honesty easy, mostly by practicing what he preaches.

“He’s extremely forthright,” said Gary Waldron, a partner at Weintraub Tobin Chediak Coleman Grodin Law Corp. in Newport Beach. “That’s not a slam on other mediators, just a particular style I appreciate. He tells you what he thinks will work and what he thinks won’t, and he’ll tell you when he doesn’t know.”

J.D. Turner, a partner and defense attorney at Lorber, Greenfield & Polito LLP who has used Cannon for several matters, said being open during a mediation with the neutral is crucial.

“He can do wonders as long as he knows he can trust me,” he said. “He has a lot of integrity and makes some tough calls that are correct. I trust him because I know he’s not going to screw me by making me pay too much or by making the plaintiff take too little.”

— J.D. Turner

Cannon, drawing on his accounting experience, has helped settle disputes. “He has a lot of integrity and makes some tough calls that are correct. I trust him because I know he’s not going to screw me by making me pay too much or by making the plaintiff take too little.”

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Cannon’s experience as a family law judge — a post he occupied for around eight years, including four as the county’s supervising judge — has helped him forge an active mediation practice in the arena and attorneys said he is deft at maneuvering around thorny situations.

Waldron, who used Cannon in a multi-million-dollar, multi party family law dispute recently, said the neutral’s ability to keep the different sides calm and informed ultimately helped settle the dispute.

“He’s adept financially,” Waldron said. “He understands those issues better than many. Don’t be afraid to present that type of information, especially if it will streamline the process.”

Outside of his ADR practice, Cannon said he dotes on his two granddaughters whenever he gets the chance. He and his wife Linda, whom he met when he was 16, have also joined up with friends recently to buy and race horses and have seen some success, although Cannon said it’s more of a hobby than a retirement plan.

Here are some attorneys who have used Cannon’s services:

Gary Waldron, Weintraub Tobin Chediak Coleman Grodin Law Corp. Newport Beach; Thomas Stabile, Stabile & Cowhig, APC, Orange; Judith Curtin, Phillips, Whisnant, Gazin, Gorczyca & Curtin, Newport Beach; Joseph Forbath, Woodruff Sparrlin & Smart, Costa Mesa; Richard Sullivan, Jarvis, Krierger & Sullivan, Irvine; Teresa Libertino, Latti Malanga Libertino, LLP.