

MONDAY, JUNE 30, 2025

Federal judge Dean Pregerson joins JAMS, hopes writing will help others

Central District judge joins JAMS and plans to write about grief, hoping to help others.

By Devon Belcher

Daily Journal Staff Writer

Senior U.S. District Judge Dean D. Pregerson, who retired June 1, has joined JAMS in Los Angeles as a mediator and said Friday he would like to write, particularly about dealing with grief, after a 29-year federal tenure handling thousands of cases while enduring several personal losses.

"After 1000s of cases and well over 1,000 felony criminal sentencings, 80 jury trials, all my work on the 9th Circuit, I felt like it was just time to pursue some of the other things I wanted to do," Pregerson said in a phone interview. "At the same time, I didn't want to put aside all that experience and do nothing with it."

"For me, very few things are more rewarding than saving parties the risk, expense and stress of protracted litigation," Pregerson said in a written statement. "I look forward to bringing my passion for mutually beneficial solutions to the JAMS panel."

Expanding on the timing of his retirement, Pregerson said, "I had lost my wife to cancer. I was a widow. I recently remarried about a year and a half ago. And I'd always had in the back of my mind that it would be nice to have the time to write. I've had some losses in my family."

His father, 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Harry Pregerson, died while still on the bench in 2017. His son, David, was killed in 2013 at the age of 23 by a hit-and-run driver.

"I've been interested in the topic of grief, perhaps helping other folks," he said. "So writing is something that I had long been in-



Senior U.S. District Judge Dean D. Pregerson

terested in. You know, I also lost my home in the recent fires. And I've been looking after my 98-year-old mom. So just all those factors came together and I thought it was just time to

hang up the robe. I took senior status in January 2016, so my seat was filled at that time."

Pregerson was appointed to the federal bench by President Bill Clinton in 1996. His thousands of cases included a 2008 ruling wherein he found immigration officials unconstitutional denied critical medical treatment from a detainee for 11 months, which led to his death from penile cancer. *Castaneda v. U.S.A. et al.*, 2:07-cv-07241 (C.D. Cal., filed Nov. 2, 2007).

He also caught the attention of legal scholars and civil rights advocates in late 2015 when he ruled that there was no substantial difference between sexual orientation discrimination and sex discrimination. The case involved former Pepperdine University women's basketball players who claimed discrimination and retaliation from their coach and university staff for being in a lesbian relationship. *Videckis et al. v. Weisenberg et al.*, 2:15-cv-00298 (C.D. Cal., filed Jan. 14, 2015).

Additionally, he sat regularly by designation on the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and wrote 11 published opinions.

Pregerson graduated from UC Davis School of Law in 1976. At the time of his appointment to the bench, he was a partner at Pregerson Richman & Luna.

JAMS stated Pregerson will be available to conduct in-person sessions, as well as virtually, for nationwide and international clients. His practice areas will include antitrust, aviation, civil rights, entertainment, intellectual property, mass tort, product liability and real estate matters.

devon_belcher@dailyjournal.com