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PERSPECTIVE

Justice David Thompson retires to join JAMS

By Douglas A. Saunders Sr

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Justice David A. Thompson retired Oct. 15 after serving nearly a quarter-century on the bench and has joined JAMS as a private neutral.

“After 24 years on the bench, I am looking forward to working as a private neutral for the next chapter in my legal career,” Thompson said. “I’m here to serve and to continue serving my community.”

Thompson wrote more than 700 opinions during his nine years on the 4th District Court of Appeal, covering the full spectrum of civil, commercial and criminal litigation, according to a JAMS news release. He also spent 15 years as an Orange County Superior Court trial judge, predominantly handling civil litigation.

The lifelong resident of Orange County said Monday he will miss his colleagues in the court the most but looks forward to the good work his future holds. Some of those colleagues he mentioned praised his selfless service.

Mary-Christine Sungaila, chair of Buchalter’s firmwide appellate practice, stated, “As an Orange County bar leader and longtime advocate be-



DAVID THOMPSON

fore this appellate court, I have appreciated firsthand Justice Thompson’s generosity with the appellate bar and his deeply thoughtful, probing, compassionate approach to cases. He has added so much to the law and the legal community. He will be missed as a Justice.”

Thompson, a strong family man and avid fisherman hopes to spend

some time on an Alaskan fishing excursion with his son.

“One day I hope to get up to Alaska to catch some halibut with my son,” Thompson said in a phone interview. “But until then I’ll be continuing my work at JAMS.”

Todd Lundell, an appellate specialist at Sheppard Mullin, said in a prepared statement that appearing before Thompson at oral argument was always challenging in the best way.

“He has a unique ability to cut to the heart of any appeal and to recognize the implications of the court’s decision on the parties, the larger community, and the development of the law,” Lundell wrote.

“Justice Thompson’s retirement leaves a hole on the court that will be difficult to fill.” “Justice Thompson has a rare combination of a hard-headed, straightahead approach to the law and a big heart that never lets him lose sight of the impact his decisions have on real people,” Justice William Bedsworth of the 4th District said in a written statement. “He is a hard worker who challenges assumptions and thinks through every consequence.”

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