



2018

An **ALM** Publication

THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL

JUNE, 2018

HON. ALLEN HURKIN-TORRES (RET.)

JAMS



CHAMPIONSHIP PEDIGREE Allen Hurkin-Torres was assigned to the bench about 20 years ago, after an earlier career as a long-haired rock drummer traveling across the United States. "As a judge in Brooklyn, I was put in charge of the inventory. My only job was to get rid of cases. To be a successful mediator, you need to have a skill set. And you get that experience by mediating a lot of cases. My time on the bench gave me that opportunity."

EXPERIENCE & EXPERTISE Hurkin-Torres takes a very practical approach to mediation. "It's important to explore the issues, but you also have to push the parties. You also have to genuinely like people for this work. On a spring day I might go for a walk with a party to talk about the case or meet with both parties for dinner." His current work on the commercial side is often confidential. "But I joke that if there is a disaster, it's probably coming to me." For example, the Supreme Court for the State of New York appointed him to serve as special master/mediator for *In re: Steam Pipe Rupture Litigation*. He also was involved in the 91st Street crane collapse and the Metro-North train derailment.

FUTURE VISION As prevalent as ADR is in the United States, that's not the case in many other countries. "Sooner or later it will almost be pro forma that cases will make a pit stop in ADR. Very often, courts are not equipped to handle a case. A judge cannot shut down the courthouse for many weeks to deal with just one case. Also, different cases need different types of neutrals. You can search out neutrals whose personality will mesh well, which is not possible for judges."

