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Hon. Stephen E. Hjelt

Administrative Law Judge, State of California, Retired

Judge Stephen Hjelt brings over 40 years of experience in health care related disputes. A trial lawyer for 17 years, he worked both as a defense and plaintiff's attorney doing personal injury, medical and dental malpractice. As an Administrative Law Judge for the last 25 years, he specialized in hearing disciplinary cases filed against licensed health care professionals by various state regulatory agencies including the Medical Board of California, the Board of Psychology, the Dental Board, the Board of Registered Nursing, and the Board of Chiropractic Examiners. For the last five years as an Administrative Law Judge, he worked exclusively as a Settlement Conference Judge in health care disciplinary cases.

Conflict Resolution Experience

Judge Hjelt has broad experience in all facets of conflict resolution. While in law practice, he served as a volunteer arbitrator for both the Los Angeles and San Diego County Superior Courts. He received his specialty training as a Mediator at the University of Nevada, Reno (The National Judicial College). He has lectured on Settlement Techniques at his court's annual continuing education conferences.

In 1993, Judge Hjelt was appointed to the Medical Quality Hearing Panel, created by the California Legislature to hear disciplinary actions against health care professionals, principally physicians and psychologists. This was a merit appointment based on a demonstration of special education, training and experience in health care related matters. Judge Hjelt was a member of this panel until his appointment as the Presiding Administrative Law Judge in San Diego in 2000. Following his tenure as Presiding Judge, he returned to hearing cases with an increasing emphasis on conducting Settlement Conferences and Mediations.

Since 1999, Judge Hjelt has been a Clinical Instructor (non-salaried) in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of California, San Diego, School of Medicine. He has been a faculty member for a two-day Medical Record Keeping Course given by the school's PACE (Physician Assessment & Clinical Education) program which draws physicians from throughout the U.S. Judge Hjelt is also a member of the UCLA Dental School Dean's Leadership Institute, which provides training to a select group of students who have the greatest potential for future leadership in the dental profession. Judge Hjelt lectures on Professionalism, Ethics and Public Policy. Judge Hjelt has been a member of the American Psychological Association (APA)

since 2007. He has been a presenter at the APA convention, has published in APA peer reviewed journals and continues to be actively involved in the association.

Practice Areas

Personal Injury, Medical and Dental Malpractice, Credentialing, Peer Review Disputes and Professional Licensure

Organizations & Achievements

Judge Hjelt has been a member of the California State Bar since 1972. He is a frequent presenter on medico-legal issues to a diverse array of specialty groups. Most recently he was a co-presenter at the Los Angeles County Bar Association Healthcare Law Section Compliance Symposium on "Physician Extenders and Scope of Practice: Risks and Trends." He is a member of the Beverly Hills Bar Association and the San Diego County Bar Association.

Education & Training

- Master of Judicial Studies (MJS) at the University of Nevada, Reno-National Judicial College, 2000. Judge Hjelt's thesis, on Informed Consent and Psychotherapy, was quoted in a law school textbook on Bioethics and the Law (Dolgin & Shepherd, Aspen Publishers)
- J.D., UCLA School of Law (1972)
- B.A., UCLA, Political Science (1968)

Judge Hjelt is available throughout California as a Mediator, Arbitrator or Settlement Judge. He is also available as a speaker on topics that involve his expertise in healthcare, law and medicine, the psychology of settlement and the use and misuse of expert witnesses.