



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF MONTEREY

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PRESS RELEASE

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MONTEREY COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT OF JUDGE EFREN N. IGLESIA

Monterey County Superior Court Presiding Judge Julie R. Culver announces the retirement of Judge Efren N. Iglesias effective May 22, 2020 after nearly 13 years of service on the Monterey County Superior Court bench.



Judge Culver remarked, “We are honored to have had the opportunity to work with Judge Iglesias over the last 13 years. His dedication and professionalism will be sincerely missed.”

Judge Iglesias was appointed to the bench in August 2007 by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and he was the first Filipino-American judge in Monterey County and in the tri-county area of Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and San Benito Counties. During his tenure, Judge Iglesias has presided over criminal cases in the Salinas and King City courthouses, as well as over civil cases in Monterey.

“It has truly been an honor and a privilege to serve Monterey County as a lawyer for 24 years and as a Superior Court judge for almost 13 years,” Judge Iglesias said.

Judge Iglesias first came to the U.S. in 1967 as an exchange student, and attended Reedley High School in Reedley, California. After one year, he returned to the Philippines to attend Aquinas University of Legazpi, from 1968 to 1971.

Amidst the political upheaval in the Philippines in 1971, and with one year left to obtain his bachelor’s degree, Judge Iglesias opted to leave Aquinas University and return to Reedley to continue his studies. Almost a year later, the government declared martial law---an action that would have prevented Judge Iglesias from traveling to and continuing his studies in the United States. Upon obtaining credits for the undergraduate college courses he took in the Philippines, Judge Iglesias obtained his Associate and Bachelor’s degrees from Reedley College and Fresno Pacific University, respectively, and attended and graduated from the San Joaquin College of Law with a Juris Doctor degree. In 1976, he passed the California Bar Examination on his first try and was admitted to the practice of law that same year.

In a letter to Judge Culver informing her of his intent to retire, Judge Iglesias stated:

It is the mission of the Monterey County Superior Court to serve the public in a respectful, courteous and efficient manner promoting trust and confidence in the legal system by providing fair, equal and open access to justice.

“When I dropped out of college during those tumultuous years in the Philippines in 1971 and came to the United States on a student visa, little did I know that I would be able to complete college and law school, become a lawyer and a judge, and raise a family in the process. This country has made it all possible for me to do so, and, trite as it may sound, to live the American Dream.”

Judge Iglesia proudly points out that he raised a service-oriented family of two registered nurses (his wife and a son), a daughter who recently became a lawyer and now works for a federal agency in Washington, D.C., and whose husband is serving in the U.S. military, and another daughter with a Masters Degree in social work who is employed as a social worker for a mental health facility in Orange County.

Prior to his appointment to the local bench, Judge Iglesia worked as a criminal defense attorney and served as a deputy county counsel with the County Counsel Offices in Imperial County and Monterey County. As a senior deputy county counsel in the Monterey County Counsel’s Office, Judge Iglesia supervised four attorneys in a 17-lawyer, four-division office. He also handled complex land use and environmental law litigation at the trial and appellate court levels. A handful of the cases he has handled through the years have resulted in published decisions and have been cited as precedent.

Of his service to the courts, Judge Iglesia is particularly proud of the manner he has presided over jury trials that have placed the court in the most favorable light to the public. This is no more evident than when former jurors write to the court expressing gratitude for their positive experience.

In one of his last jury trials before submitting his retirement, Judge Iglesia received a letter from a juror who wrote:

“I want to thank you for the wonderful opportunity to serve on a jury in your courtroom. I walked away from the experience with great pride in our justice system and a renewed sense of patriotism. Your leadership and guidance of the jury and respective attorneys was a tremendous learning experience for me. I have great admiration for the manner in which you lead the proceedings. You demonstrated patience, wisdom and poise as we did our best to come to an objective decision.”

Leaving the bench in the midst of a pandemic due to some health concerns, Judge Iglesia lauded the work that his colleagues and court staff continue to perform:

“I wish to acknowledge the tremendous and often challenging work that my fellow judges and court staff perform every day. I know that many of them are often the unsung heroes in our task of making sure that our criminal justice system functions and continues to flourish in this country.”

When asked about his plans in retirement, Judge Iglesia responded that in addition to spending more time with his family, his retirement can best be described by the acronym MTTV: Music, Tennis, Travel and Volunteer. While most of the components of his retirement plan will be placed on hold due to the pandemic, Judge Iglesia continues to engage in his favorite pastime: playing the electric guitar and, eventually, resuming gigs with a couple of rock ‘n roll bands he has been playing with during the last 10 years.

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