

# NEWS RELEASE

## SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

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## JUDGE RONALD E. ALBERS – SF COLLABORATIVE COURT CHAMPION – ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

**SAN FRANCISCO** -- Effective February 3, 2017, Judge Ronald E. Albers retired from the San Francisco bench after a 41-year career as a Judge, Commissioner, public defender, sole practitioner and civil rights advocate.

"Judge Albers' positivity and compassion for those who appeared before him is an inspiration to his colleagues on the San Francisco bench," Presiding Judge Teri L. Jackson said. "He was deeply committed to stopping the revolving door for those who suffered from mental illness and substance abuse involved in the criminal justice system. He was instrumental in shaping our Collaborative Courts into the successful and nationally recognized programs they are today. Judge Albers was a devoted and hard-working jurist and will be missed greatly."

Judge Albers began his judicial career as Commissioner in 2002, where he presided over Drug Court and Proposition 36 Court, as well as various Felony and Misdemeanor cases. Appointed to a judgeship by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2009, he was the first openly gay Judge appointed by a Republican governor. He served in many capacities at the Hall of Justice, Civic Center Courthouse and the Polk Street Annex. He has the distinction of being the only Judge who has presided over most of San Francisco's Adult Collaborative Courts, including: Back on

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Track, Behavioral Health Court, Drug Court, Community Justice Center (CJC) and Proposition 36 Court. In 2007, Judge Albers, along with City officials, spearheaded the development of the Community Justice Center (CJC). With Judge Albers' vision and leadership, the Court and the City opened the CJC in March 2009. "Judge Albers was one of the architects of the CJC, and because of his invaluable and dedicated efforts during its planning and implementation, the program continues to flourish and expand to better serve the needs of the community," said Lisa Lightman, Director of Collaborative Courts.

Judge Albers was well-known nationally by Judges and policy-makers as a true champion of the collaborative justice movement. He was committed to the treatment and behavior modification principles behind collaborative courts and used them as a guide to redefine the Court's role in the administration of justice.

"I am grateful for Judge Albers' commitment and passion for collaborative courts and for supporting our efforts in the field," said Dr. Douglas B. Marlowe, Senior Scientific Consultant for the National Association for Drug Court Professionals. "As academicians and researchers, it is tough to relay our messages to the field, and he heard and applied those messages with clarity and zeal."

Focused on improving outcomes for defendants and communities from the bench, it was his mission to change the way the Court helps underserved populations in the criminal justice system - mentally-ill and drug-addicted offenders. "You can't punish someone out of an addiction or a mental illness," Judge Albers said. "As a Judge, it was my job to make decisions that improve people's lives while protecting public safety. I was focused on leveraging better outcomes for people through engagement with the Court, and engagement with their treatment plan. It is my heartfelt belief that collaborative treatment courts are the best weapon in protecting public safety and saving lives."

Judge Albers' passion and commitment was echoed in the sentiments of past Drug Court clients who celebrated his retirement with personal stories of how he impacted their lives. "To the man who saved my life," said one man. "Thank you for helping me on my journey," added a

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woman. "You never gave up on me and always told me I had it in me to get clean."

Judge Albers served on various statewide committees and organizations which included: Chair for the Commission on Judicial Nominees Evaluation; Member of the State Bar's Board of Governors; Member of the California Judicial Council; Member of the California Collaborative Courts Advisory Committee; Member of the Judicial Council's Court Technology Advisory Committee; and founding Board Member and former Co-Chair of Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom (BALIF).

From 1978 to 2002, Judge Albers served as a trial attorney, then head attorney, for the San Francisco Public Defender's Office. From 1978 to 1979, Judge Albers was a trial attorney with Legal Services for Children. Prior to that, he served as the director for the Juvenile Research Project. In 1974, he was a sole practitioner.

Judge Albers earned a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School and a Bachelor's of Arts degree from Cornell College.

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