

# NEWS RELEASE

## SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

### COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

400 McAllister Street, Room 205  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4512  
Phone: 415-551-5737  
FAX: 415-551-5701



**T. MICHAEL YUEN**  
COURT EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Contact:

**Ann E. Donlan**  
**(415) 551-5957**  
[adonlan@sftc.org](mailto:adonlan@sftc.org)  
**Follow Us on Twitter:**  
<https://twitter.com/SFSuperiorCourt>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** July 19, 2016

## **JUDGE JAMES P. COLLINS – A LEGENDARY HALL OF JUSTICE LEGAL EAGLE – ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT**

**SAN FRANCISCO** -- It was no surprise in 2010 when Judge James P. Collins told a reporter writing his first judicial profile, "I never want to leave" the Hall of Justice. During the seven years he donned a robe since his September 2009 appointment, Judge Collins did not leave the HOJ – until now.

Effective July 22, Judge Collins will retire from the San Francisco Bench after practicing and serving at the HOJ for nearly 40 years in multiple capacities as a police officer, criminal defense attorney and Judge. At the HOJ, Judge Collins has deftly served as the Court's settlement Judge, working with the prosecution and defense to resolve Criminal cases before trial.

"It's hard for me to imagine what it will feel like to not walk through the doors of this storied building," Judge Collins said. "While many people can't wait to leave this old, crumbling courthouse, this is where I relished my roles in the criminal justice system. I am grateful for all the years I was able to try to make a difference in the lives of San Franciscans and for the opportunity to serve alongside the brightest legal minds and public servants in the state."

Prosecutors, defense attorneys, police officers, court staff and fellow Judges alike will miss the congenial, straightforward Judge who drew from his experience on the City's police beat and

**-MORE-**

**JUDGE COLLINS/SFSC**  
**2-2-2-2**

countless high-profile, headline-grabbing criminal cases to work with both sides to fashion just plea agreements. More than one Presiding Judge pleaded with Judge Collins not to turn in his robes to avoid the loss of the veteran HOJ practitioner and invaluable, hard-working jurist.

“In addition to being very knowledgeable and skillful in both trying and resolving cases, Judge Collins was the person everyone went to at the Hall when they had a problem – Judges, attorneys and staff, alike,” Presiding Judge John K. Stewart said. “He was the ultimate ‘fixer,’ and will be sorely missed.”

Before launching his legal career as a sole practitioner in 1978, Judge Collins served for a decade as a decorated San Francisco police officer. Drawing from his time on the beat and his deep connections and San Francisco roots, Judge Collins earned the reputation as the go-to criminal justice attorney in the Bay Area. Based on a 2003 *Chronicle* survey of Judges and attorneys, he was ranked one of 10 best attorneys in Northern California. Among the high-profile cases he handled was defending a San Francisco police officer charged in connection with the infamous “Fajitagate” police scandal.

After more than 30 years as a prominent criminal defense attorney who routinely made the public and private “top lawyer” lists in San Francisco, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Judge Collins to the San Francisco bench in September 2009.

Judge Collins’ retirement leaves three vacancies on the 52-member San Francisco Superior Court Bench.

**###**