

## Judicial Profile

JACQUELINE CAREY-WILSON

# Hon. Robert J. Timlin U.S. District Court for the Central District of California

During a career that has spanned more than 40 years, Hon. Robert J. Timlin has accumulated an outstanding record of giving back both to the community and to the legal profession.

Judge Timlin has dedicated his life to public service. In 1954, he began the study of law at the University of Michigan School of Law. However, his studies were interrupted by two years of service in the U.S. Army. After leaving the Army in 1957, he resumed his studies at Georgetown University Law School. Upon graduation, he served as in-house counsel for the Pennsylvania Railroad in Chicago. After President John F. Kennedy's inauguration, Judge Timlin joined the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., where he was active in the Junior Bar Association.

Judge Timlin obtained an LL.M. degree from Georgetown University and moved to Los Angeles to work in the office of the U.S. attorney. In 1966, he relocated to Riverside County, Calif., where he has lived and worked ever since. Between 1966 and 1976, he served as the city attorney for Corona and Norco and as the attorney for the Redevelopment Agency of Corona. He was a member of the boards of directors of the Corona and Norco YMCA and the Red Cross, serving as president on each board for one year during that time. He was also a member of the St. Edward's Elementary School Board.

Judge Timlin was appointed to the U.S. District Court as a magistrate judge, a position he held from 1971 through 1975. From 1976 through 1980, he served as a municipal court judge in Corona. The judge was appointed to the Riverside Superior Court in 1980.

In 1990, Judge Timlin was elevated to the Fourth District Court of Appeal. During his four years at the appellate court, Judge Timlin mentored law students and law school graduates during their internships at the court. "Judge Timlin was always prepared to listen to our ideas and concerns," said Ruchi Gupta, who was Judge Timlin's intern in 1994 and is now a deputy public defender in Los Angeles. "His advice provided an invaluable part of my legal training."

Judge Timlin was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California in 1994. He presides in the Eastern Division, which includes Riverside and San Bernardino counties. On the fed-



Photo courtesy of the Riverside County Bar Association.

eral bench, Judge Timlin continues to mentor recent law school graduates and law students. Each year, Judge Timlin accepts two law clerks to assist him in conducting research and writing proposed orders in civil matters. In addition, he accepts law school interns, who work closely with his law clerks. In 2004–2005, Judge Timlin has two law clerks and three interns.

When the law clerks and interns begin their work in his chambers, Judge Timlin goes over the basics and advises them on the rules of ethics in the federal courts. He encourages his law clerks and interns to take the time to observe trials in both the state and federal court. Judge Timlin enjoys working with the new and vibrant attorneys. "I thrive on working with these young people," said Judge Timlin. "I also recognize that I am helping future members of the bar in the litigation process. They deal with real people and real issues."

Attorneys whom Judge Timlin has mentored are now involved in all aspects of the legal profession. Tom Jirgal, his law clerk from 1998 to 1999, is now with the litigation department of O'Melveny & Myers in Los Angeles. Jirgal had a positive experience when he clerked for Judge Timlin. "Judge Timlin approaches each case in an unbiased manner," he said. "He instructed the law clerks not to be advocates, but to find out the law on a certain issue. I read the legal papers and evaluated argument and assisted the judge in drafting the orders. You are exposed to so many areas of law not covered in law school. You also get up to speed on federal procedure. Initially, it is a significant pay sacrifice, but I look at the clerkship as my full employment act. Having the 'law clerk' on my résumé means that I will always be able to find a job."

Martin Estrada clerked for Judge Timlin in 2002–2003 and had a fantastic experience working for the judge. "Judge Timlin has the most amazing legal mind and was always available to discuss a case," Estrada said. "He would come to me, in my small cubicle, to discuss the issues. He would often recall new cases so quickly that I questioned if he were right. Upon completing the research, he was always right. He was very knowledgeable on the law. I was also impressed by his humanity, which was exemplified by his kindness to everyone he came in contact with, regardless of status." Estrada recalled several instances in which Judge Timlin assisted pro se litigants in navigating the court system. Estrada clerked for Judge Arthur Alarcon of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2003–2004 as well and is now an associate at Munger, Tolles & Olson in Los Angeles.

Other former law clerks and interns who worked for Judge Timlin are scattered throughout California. One, Phyllis Oscar, is teaching with the American Bar Association in Uzbekistan; she resides in that country and is working with the local government on criminal and civil justice reform. Melissa Goldberg is a clerk for Judge Jeffrey S. White of the U.S. District Court in San Francisco. Elyssa Getreu is an assistant U.S. attorney in Los Angeles. David Silberman is a deputy county counsel in San Jose. Adam Wolf is a professor at the University of California at Los Angeles. Erin Bernstein is a clerk for California Supreme Court Justice Carlos Moreno. Samra Roth is a deputy public defender in Riverside.



Judge Timlin with his staff: (l to r) Patricia Hurst, judicial secretary; David Kirman, law clerk; Lenora Pulliam, courtroom deputy; Judge Timlin; Eric Broxmeyer, law clerk; Dina Ariza, intern; and Eileen Fry-Bowers, intern.

Judge Timlin is taking senior status effective Feb. 1 and will remain in Riverside until fall 2005, when his law clerks will have finished their year terms. Judge Timlin will then reside with his wife, Caroline, in Carpinteria, Calif., and his chambers and courtroom will be in Los Angeles.

Judge Timlin began his professional career by defending our nation and, for these past 33 years, has upheld and enforced the Constitution and the rule of law as a judicial officer in the federal and state courts. His gentle judicial demeanor and his approachable temperament have set a welcome standard for the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California's Eastern Division. Judge Timlin's influence here will long be felt by the attorneys he mentored, the attorneys who appeared before him, and the judicial officers with whom he served. **TFL**

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*Jacqueline Carey-Wilson is deputy county counsel in San Bernardino, Calif., and is a member of the FBA Inland Empire Chapter.*

**CORRECTION** The credit for a photo that accompanied the profile of Judge Walter S. Smith in the January issue was omitted. The photo on page 15 is by Chris McSwain Photography, which features Judge Smith with his official portrait by Sherry Harrington.