



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF MONTEREY

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PRESS RELEASE

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MONTEREY SUPERIOR COURT PRESIDING JUDGE ANNOUNCES JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP FOR 2024-2025

Monterey Superior Court Presiding Judge Pamela L. Butler is pleased to announce that the Honorable Rafael Vazquez has been elected by the bench to serve as Monterey County Superior Court's next Assistant Presiding Judge, commencing his term January 1, 2024. Judge Vazquez will serve as Assistant Presiding Judge (APJ) in 2024 – 2025 and as Presiding Judge (PJ) in 2026 – 2027.

Current Assistant Presiding Judge Carrie M. Panetta will commence her term as Presiding Judge effective January 1, 2024 and will serve as Presiding Judge (PJ) in 2024 - 2025.

Judge Vazquez has served on the Monterey County Superior Court bench since 2017, after being appointed to that position by Governor Jerry Brown. He currently presides over a felony trial department and serves as the Criminal Division Supervisor, Chair of the Finance Committee, and is on the Judicial Mentorship Program Committee. He previously served as an assistant district attorney at the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office from 2010 to 2017. Judge Vazquez was also an associate at Kazan, McClain, Abrams, Lyons, Harley and Greenwood PLC from 2008 to 2009. From 2007 to 2008 he was also an associate at Abramson Church and Stave LLP. Judge Vazquez also served as the deputy district attorney for the Alameda County District Attorney's Office from 2004 - 2007, where he handled cases involving murder, child sexual assault, and criminal street gang crimes.

Judge Vazquez is a Monterey County native and grew up in South Monterey County. He was raised by an immigrant family and was the first in his family to receive education beyond the 6th grade. He earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 2000 from San Jose State University and a master's degree in criminal justice in 2001. In 2004, he completed his juris doctor degree from the University of San Francisco Law School. Judge Vazquez has also served as a mentor to many young people in Salinas through various volunteer agencies, such as youth sports organizations, including youth baseball, and has served as a volunteer providing advocacy to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. He also focused on protecting farm worker women from sexual assault in the fields. Judge Vazquez also continues to serve as a mentor to students from Hartnell College and the University of San Francisco School of Law.

Judge Butler expressed, "I am deeply grateful that Judge Panetta and Judge Vazquez are willing to take on these important leadership roles in fulfilling the Court's mission to provide access to justice to the people of Monterey County. ***I hope you will join me in welcoming Judge Panetta and Judge Vazquez in their new Judicial Leadership roles.***"

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