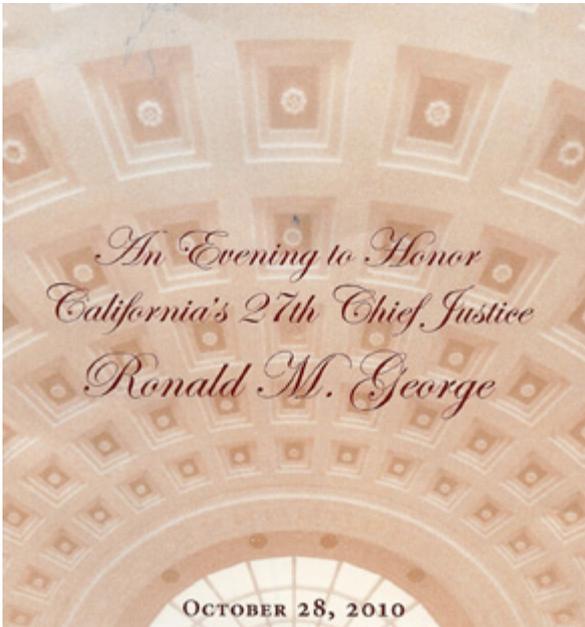


---

## *Judicial Council Retirement Tribute and Presentation Honoring Chief Justice Ronald M. George*

JAKE DEAR\*

---



*The Chief Justice  
and Mrs. Barbara George.*

On October 28, 2010, in the Auditorium of the Hiram W. Johnson Building in San Francisco (adjoining the Earl Warren Building, where the Supreme Court is headquartered), the Judicial Council of California hosted a retirement tribute to Chief Justice Ronald M. George. Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Director William C. Vickrey served as master of ceremonies for a gathering of approximately 200 judicial, legislative and executive branch leaders and justice system partners (including Society President David McFadden) — plus the Chief Justice’s legal and administrative staff.

The program featured a round table discussion moderated by lawyer and journalist Manuel A. Medrano, addressing the Chief’s legal decisions and administrative accomplishments. Panelists were Court of Appeal Justice Judith D. McConnell; Professor J. Clark Kelso; former Judge Terry B. Friedman; and AOC Chief Deputy Director Ronald G. Overholt. Medrano also conducted an impromptu live interview of the Chief.

Interspersed throughout the event were four video presentations. The first was a montage career retrospective with family photos of the Chief — including images of him up close and personal with a Tanzanian giraffe, a Burmese python, and lots of Antarctic penguins. Two other messages were from former United

---

\*Chief Supervising Attorney, California Supreme Court.



*Administrative Office of the Courts Director  
William C. Vickrey opens the program.*

---



*Chief Justice-elect Tani Cantil-Sakauye presents a gift from the Judicial Council to Chief Justice Ronald M. George*

---



*The panel discussion (LEFT TO RIGHT) — Manuel A. Medrano, moderator; Prof. J. Clark Kelso; AOC Chief Deputy Director Ronald G. Overholt; Court of Appeal Justice Judith D. McConnell; and former Judge Terry B. Friedman.*

---

States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, and Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Margaret Marshall. Justice O'Connor said: "You've been a marvelous Chief Justice. You've made us proud all across the country and you've exercised wonderful leadership within California Courts. We've looked to you for good examples for all the years of your service." Chief Justice Marshall proclaimed herself "President of the worldwide fan club of Ronald George," and proceeded to extol his virtues as "a visionary leader" who had made the California courts "a national model"; and as "a gracious, generous human being who is deeply committed to access to justice and to an impartial interpretation of the laws — for everybody." Finally, in video that was submitted at the last minute, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger beamed into the camera and intoned: "Quite frankly, I'm surprised the FPPC wasn't on your case for not registering as a lobbyist based on the number of times I saw you in my office around the Capitol constantly advocating for the courts. . . ."

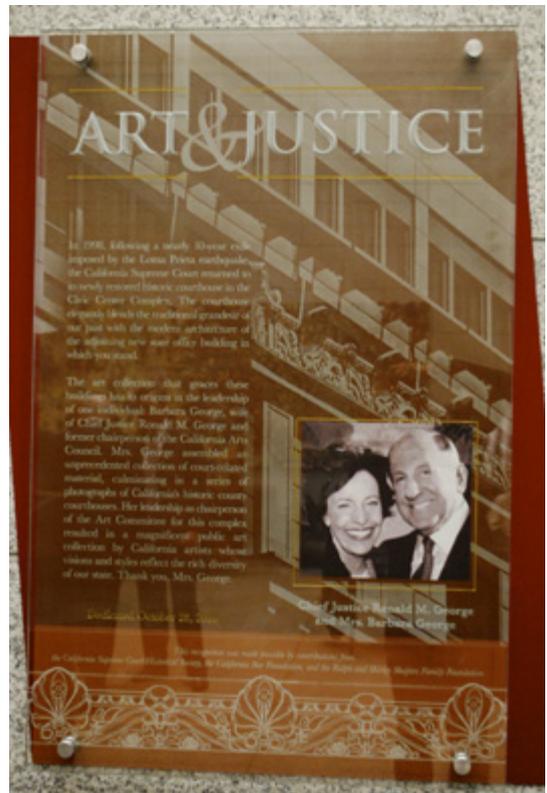
Court of Appeal Justice (and Chief Justice-Elect) Tani Cantil-Sakauye spoke and presented a gift from the Judicial Council — an iPad for a famously computer-shy fellow. Turning around a phrase that he had used a few years ago to describe his own technological prowess, she told him with a wink that he'd no longer be allowed to claim the title of "roadkill . . . on the information superhighway."

Some of the biggest smiles of the evening were earned by the melodious duo, Professor Kelso and Justice Moreno (the latter under a smart fedora) who serenaded the Chief with an appropriately modified version of Paul Anka's *My Way*. The closing verse:

"So here we are, Ronald M. George  
 With work well done, ahead you forge  
 You have our love, you always will  
 You leave behind big robes to fill  
 From one and all, we're glad to say  
 You did it your way."

The crowd loved it.

After brief closing remarks from the Chief, the party repaired upstairs to the Great Hall, where all participated in a toast by Supreme Court Justice Marvin R. Baxter, commemorating the Chief as a court and judicial council colleague. Finally, Society President David McFadden and the other guests looked on as Court of Appeal Justice Brad R. Hill unveiled and dedicated a stunning three-dimensional glass and metal plaque, permanently affixed to the wall of the Great Hall, honoring the Chief Justice and his wife, Barbara George, and bearing a photo of the dashing couple. ★



*Three-dimensional glass and metal plaque permanently affixed to the wall of the Great Hall. The plaque, sponsored in part by the Society, reads:*

## ART & JUSTICE

In 1998, following a nearly 10-year exile imposed by the Loma Prieta earthquake, the California Supreme Court returned to its newly restored historic courthouse in the Civic Center Complex. The courthouse elegantly blends the traditional grandeur of our past with the modern architecture of the adjoining new state office building in which you stand.

The art collection that graces these buildings has its origins in the leadership of one individual: Barbara George, wife of Chief Justice Ronald M. George and former chairperson of the California Arts Council. Mrs. George assembled an unprecedented collection of court-related material, culminating in a series of photographs of California's historic county courthouses. Her leadership as chairperson of the Art Committee for this complex resulted in a magnificent public art collection by California artists whose visions and styles reflect the rich diversity of our state. Thank you, Mrs. George.

Dedicated October 28, 2010.

This recognition was made possible by contributions from the California Supreme Court Historical Society, the California Bar Foundation, and the Ralph and Shirley Shapiro Family Foundation.