

Response by

JUSTICE KATHRYN MICKLE WERDEGAR

Thank you Chief, and thank you to all my colleagues. Thank you all. You have been more than generous in your comments. It's clear the California Supreme Court knows how to say goodbye. The problem is, you make it very difficult to leave.

This is an emotional time for me. The court has been my home, my community and my extended family, for twenty-three years, or almost thirty, if you count my time as a staff attorney. When I arrived with Justice Panelli in 1985, it was the first so-called Brown court; Rose Bird was chief and Justice Grodin was an associate justice. Then came the Deukmejian court, when Malcolm Lucas took the helm. Later, Ron George was our chief during what became the Wilson court. Today we have an amalgam — the Wilson/Schwarzenegger/Brown court.

During my twenty-three years, I've had the privilege of serving with three outstanding chief justices and eleven different associate justices. Indeed, the entire court has been replaced during my tenure, and at our conferences I have sat in every associate justice chair around the table. In 1994, when I started, the most senior judge was the venerable Stanley Mosk; he

* Associate Justice, California Supreme Court, 1994–2017.

spoke first, I spoke last. Today, it is I who speaks first. Soon it will be Justice Chin. So goes the evolution of the court.

As I consider the court today, I cannot imagine a finer group of colleagues — both for their legal acumen and their personal warmth and collegiality. I have no doubt that in their hands the California Supreme Court will continue to be, as Jake Dear documented in his law review article, the premier state court in the country.¹

For myself, I couldn't have achieved what I have without the support of my superb staff: Greg Curtis, Jason Marks, Kaye Reeves, Larry Lee, and Keith Evens-Orville. And the administrative assistance of Pauline Stafne. I am deeply indebted to each of them.

I shall miss my staff, I shall miss my colleagues, and I shall miss all of you who dedicate your talents to the work of the court. I know I'll miss my parking space. And I certainly will miss the fine care of the CHP.

Thank you all. These have been wonderful years. It's hard to leave, but I am. I wish you all the very best.

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¹ Jake Dear and Edward W. Jessen, "Followed Rates" and Leading State Cases: 1940–2005, 41 DAVIS L. REV. 683 (2007).