

JUSTICE KATHRYN MICKLE WERDEGAR

A Congressman’s Tribute

JARED HUFFMAN*

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of California Supreme Court Justice Kathryn Werdegar on her retirement after 23 years of exceptional stewardship on the court and 55 years of public service.

A resident of Marin County, Justice Werdegar received her Bachelor’s degree with honors from the University of California, Berkeley, whereupon she began her subsequent legal studies and became the first woman to be elected editor-in-chief of the California Law Review. She completed her law degree at the George Washington University School of Law, where she graduated as the valedictorian of her class.

Upon graduating from law school, Justice Werdegar went to work as an attorney for the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice in 1962. She showed clear determination and initiative, working directly with Attorney General Robert Kennedy and writing the amicus brief that pressed for the release from jail of Martin Luther King, Jr.

After moving back to California in 1963, Justice Werdegar took on a number of academic and legal challenges before going to work as a research

* Member of Congress, 2nd Congressional District of California. Published in the Congressional Record, July 17, 2017.



JARED HUFFMAN

MEMBER OF CONGRESS
2ND DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

July 17, 2017

Honorable Kathryn Werdegar
Supreme Court of California
350 McAllister Street
San Francisco, CA 94102-4797

Dear Kathryn,

I want to thank you for your fifty-five years of public service, and twenty-three years of judicial stewardship on the California Supreme Court. After learning about your upcoming retirement, I had a Congressional Record Statement drafted and read on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. This statement has been added into the Library of Congress, and will commemorate in perpetuity your life-long service to the public and legal community.

Congratulations on your retirement, and best wishes on your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress

NOT PRINTED AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE

attorney for the State Court of Appeal in 1981. Showing a voracious work ethic and attention to detail, she went on to become a senior staff attorney for the California Supreme Court only four years later.

Justice Werdegar's career as a judge began in 1991, when Governor Wilson appointed her to the State Court of Appeal, only ten years after becoming a staff member for that body.

Shortly thereafter, in 1994, Justice Werdegar was appointed by the Governor to the California Supreme Court where she has been ever since.

During her tenure on the California Supreme Court, Justice Werdegar strove to understand the real world impacts of each case brought before her. In doing so, she went beyond politics and ideology to prioritize the rights of people in both her majority and dissenting opinions.

Some notable examples of this include her majority opinion that greatly softened California's Three Strikes law, her 2008 ruling that bans on same-sex marriages are unconstitutional, and her single dissenting opinion that gun manufacturers have a responsibility for the weapons they sell to the public. Because of her clear dedication to the law and rigorous approach to each case, Justice Werdegar is well regarded by her colleagues on and off of the bench.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in expressing deep appreciation for Justice Werdegar's extraordinary service to the legal profession and the public at large by extending to her best wishes on her retirement.

★ ★ ★