

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
County of Marin



Press Release

Release Date: September 11, 2025

Passing of Honorable Judge Paul M. Haakenson

SAN RAFAEL – It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Hon. Judge Paul M. Haakenson of the Marin County Superior Court, who passed away on September 10, 2025, surrounded by his loved ones. He will be deeply missed by the entire Court, the legal community, and all those whose lives he touched through his service, leadership, and commitment to justice.

Judge Haakenson was appointed to the Marin County Superior Court by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in December 2006, succeeding Judge Vernon Smith, and served the community until his retirement on May 16, 2024. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of California, Davis, and went on to receive his Juris Doctor from the University of San Francisco. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Haakenson spent more than a decade at the Marin County District Attorney's Office, where he led the specialized crimes unit and handled some of the most serious criminal cases and advocated for the vulnerable.

Throughout nearly two decades on the bench, Judge Haakenson was recognized for his integrity, innovative leadership, and community engagement. As Presiding Judge, he led the Court through major technological advancements, including laying the foundation for Marin's nationally-recognized ECourt electronic filing system, which received the 2023 IJIS Institute Thomas J. O'Reilly Innovation Award for advancing public sector information sharing. Judge Haakenson was also dedicated to supporting access to justice, championing efficiency and collaboration with the local bar, and volunteering countless hours to programs designed to increase legal services for the underserved.

Judge Haakenson's vision, warmth, and unwavering fairness inspired colleagues and litigants alike. The profound impact of his judicial approach changed many lives, including those he mentored and those who appeared before him in court. He was recently honored with the President's Lifetime Achievement Award by the Marin County legal community, underscoring his enduring legacy.

The Court extends its deepest condolences to Judge Haakenson's family, friends, and all who mourn his loss. He will be truly missed.

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For additional information regarding this press release,
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