



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

PRESS RELEASE

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PASSING OF THE HONORABLE VENETTA S. TASSOPULOS

The United States District Court for the Central District of California mourns the loss of retired Magistrate Judge Venetta S. Tassopulos, who passed away on Monday, February 6, 2023, at the age of 95.

Judge Tassopulos was a pioneer of the Court's magistrate judge bench and one of the leading magistrate judges in the nation. From 1968 to 1971, Judge Tassopulos served as a commissioner for the Court. In 1971, following the establishment of the federal magistrate system, Judge Tassopulos was appointed as a magistrate judge for the Court (the title then was United States Magistrate). She was the first woman in the nation to serve as a full-time magistrate judge. Judge Tassopulos served as the district's first chief magistrate judge (then referred to as the presiding magistrate) from 1971 to 1987. Judge Tassopulos remained on the bench until 1994. Following her retirement from the bench, Judge Tassopulos had a considerable career as a mediator, arbitrator, private judge, and special master.

Before joining the Court, Judge Tassopulos worked in private practice from 1962 to 1968, handling both civil and criminal matters. From 1960 to 1961, she worked as a deputy public defender for Los Angeles County. Judge Tassopulos received her undergraduate degree in 1948, her master's degree in 1957, and her law degree in 1960, all from the University of California, Berkeley. Before attending law school, Judge Tassopulos was an elementary school teacher.

During her career, Judge Tassopulos earned multiple honors and awards, including the American Bar Association Flaschner Judicial Award. "Judge Tassopulos was a fair and thoughtful jurist who served as a mentor to many," expressed Chief Judge Philip S. Gutierrez. "Her contributions to the district and legal profession are still felt today and undoubtedly will be for years. We extend our deepest condolences to Judge Tassopulos's family." Retired District Judge and Chief Judge emeritus George H. King, one of Judge Tassopulos's mentees, shared, "Judge Tassopulos set a standard of excellence that those of us who followed her have tried to emulate. She was a judge who commanded her courtroom with a calm confidence, impeccable judgment, analytical rigor and utmost decency. She was one of the most highly respected judges in our district and will be greatly missed."

Judge Tassopulos is survived by her son, Jim Tassopulos.

KIRY K. GRAY
DISTRICT COURT EXECUTIVE / CLERK OF COURT