

# Pathways to the Bench



Friday, June 8, 2024

11:30 am - 5:30 pm

Milton Marks Conference Center, Lower Level  
455 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco

## SPEAKER BIOS

### A Deeper Dive into the Superior Court Appointment Process

#### ***Speakers:***

Hon. Russell Roeca, Judge, Superior Court of San Francisco

Hon. Eric Fleming, Judge, Superior Court of San Francisco

Claudia Vetesi, Chair, BASF Judiciary Committee

Chhaya Malik, 2024 JNE Commission Chair

#### ***Speaker Bios***

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# Hon. Russell S. Roeca

## Judge, Superior Court in San Francisco

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**Russell S. Roeca** is a judge in the San Francisco County Superior Court. He was appointed by Governor Newsom in 2020. Judge Roeca currently serves on the statewide Executive Committee of the California Judicial Mentor Program (CJMP).

During the 20 years prior to his judicial appointment, Judge Roeca was a partner in Roeca Haas Montes De Oca LLP, a boutique San Francisco firm. Prior to starting the Roeca Haas firm, Judge Roeca was a partner in Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP and before that, he worked as an associate for several different firms.

Judge Roeca's commitment to diversity in the legal profession, including the judiciary, is as long as his career. He began volunteering his time and energy to work on diversity issues as soon as he graduated from law school in the early 1980's. His volunteer work has focused largely on ensuring equal opportunity for members of the LGBTQ community. He served on the Board of Governors for the national LGBTQ rights group, the Human Rights Campaign, from 1994 to 1998, and has been a longstanding member of Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom.

Judge Roeca also served as president of the Bar Association of San Francisco in 2009 and has won numerous awards including the State Bar of California's 2010 Myer J. Sankary Lawyer of the Year award, Small & Solo Firms and the 2011 Bench Bar Coalition Leader of the Year award.

Judge Roeca was born in Hollywood, one of five sons, to a screenwriter dad and a mom who was one of just three women in her 1946 USC law school graduating class. He has been married to his husband, Rich Vernon, for more than forty years—and maintaining the legal right to that marriage has been quite a journey.

# Hon. Eric Fleming

Supervising Judge of the San Francisco Criminal Courts and the Presiding Judge of the San Francisco Superior Court Appellate Division

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Judge Eric Fleming is the Supervising Judge of the San Francisco Criminal Courts and the Presiding Judge of the San Francisco Superior Court Appellate Division. He was the chief trial and managing attorney of the homicide and gang units in the San Francisco District Attorney's Office. Before becoming an Assistant District attorney he worked as an Associate at Cooley LLP. He is an adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco School of Law and UC Law – San Francisco. He received a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering from Tulane University and a J.D. from the University of San Francisco School of law.

# Claudia M. Vetesi

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Claudia focuses her practice on the defense of consumer class actions and on complex commercial litigation, including unfair business competition, false advertising, product liability, and privacy matters. She is currently representing numerous consumer goods manufacturers and retailers in false advertising and mislabeling class action lawsuits. Claudia also regularly counsels clients in the food, cosmetics, retail, and technology industries. She represents companies in false advertising disputes before the National Advertising Division (NAD) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc.

Claudia is active in MoFo's pro bono efforts, and recently traveled to El Paso, Texas, to work with families separated and detained at the border. She is also supervising a pro bono collaboration with Equal Rights Advocates, a nonprofit fighting for gender justice in work places and schools across the country. The initiative will help students who have been victims of sexual assault, attempted assault, or harassment find support and seek justice. Claudia is also a board member of Bay Area Legal Aid and a former board member of Equal Rights Advocates.

Claudia is an editor and frequent contributor to MoFo's [Class Dismissed](#) blog, which provides reports about the latest defense news, developments, and trends in class action lawsuits and product liability issues that affect consumer-facing companies. Her perspectives are also respected in the larger legal community: Claudia has published articles about class action and false advertising issues, and is a co-author of Chapter 7 — "Unfair Competition in California Business Litigation 2016" — of *The Recorder*. She also regularly speaks at conferences on class action and advertising trends.

Claudia is currently serving as a Lawyer Representative for the Northern District of California through 2023, and is a member of the American Inns of Court. She received her J.D. degree in 2004 from Berkeley Law (Boalt Hall School of Law), where she was an associate editor of the *Berkeley Technology Law Journal*.

# Chhaya Malik

## 2024 JNE Commission Chair

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Chhaya Malik is the Chair of the Judicial Nominee Evaluations Commission for the 2024-2025 term. Appointed by the State Bar Board of Trustees, JNE is charged with thoroughly investigating and evaluating candidates under consideration for appointment by the governor to California judgeships. Separate from this very important public service, Chhaya is the Deputy Director of Dispute Resolution Division (“DRD”), within the California Civil Rights Department (“CRD”). There Chhaya is responsible for managing DRD which is a key part of California’s efforts to directly address and resolve civil rights disputes by providing mediation services for complaints filed with the CRD.

Prior to joining the CRD, Chhaya served as Special Counsel at Ramsey & Ehrlich spearheading investigations into misconduct as well as defending individuals in enforcement actions brought by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and other governmental authorities. Prior to that, Chhaya served as the interagency policy lead at the United States Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and as a litigator at Hogan Lovells LLP. She also served as the Thurgood Marshall Fellow at the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area and as counsel at the Advancement Project working on matters related to voting rights, race discrimination, and poverty law.

Chhaya received her J.D. from U.C. Berkeley (Boalt Hall) and received her undergraduate degree from U.C. Berkeley, with Highest Honors in Business Administration. While in law school, she worked on the appellate team of a death row inmate through the Death Penalty Clinic of the U.C. Berkeley School of Law. Before law school, Chhaya worked as a financial analyst in mergers & acquisitions at Goldman Sachs.