

# UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

## Appellate Advocacy Program

March 19, 2019  
San Diego, California

### Panelist Bios

**HONORABLE MARGARET M. McKEOWN, Circuit Judge**, was born in Casper, Wyoming. She was appointed by Bill Clinton to the Ninth Circuit in 1998. Prior to her appointment to the federal bench, Judge McKeown spent her career in private practice in Seattle at Perkins Coie LLP, and she also served as special assistant to the Secretary of the Interior and special assistant at the White House from 1980 to 1981. During her time on the Court she has served on and chaired the national judicial ethics committee and both the national and circuit wide Workplace Environment Committees. She earned her J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center in 1975.

**HONORABLE JOHN B. OWENS, Circuit Judge**, was born in Washington D.C. He was appointed to the Ninth Circuit by Barack Obama in 2014. Upon graduation from law school, Judge Owens served as a law clerk to Judge J. Clifford Wallace while he was Chief Judge of the Ninth Circuit, and then to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Other than two relatively short stints in private practice, Judge Owens has worked for the federal government his entire career, first at the Office of Consumer Litigation at the Department of Justice, and then as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Central and Southern Districts of California for a total of 12 years. During his last 3 years as an AUSA in the Southern District he served as deputy chief in the Major Frauds Section and as Chief of the Criminal Division. He earned his J.D. from Stanford Law School in 1996.

**TODD BURNS** practices primarily in the areas of federal criminal and civil rights law, at both the trial and appellate levels. Prior to entering private practice in 2011, Mr. Burns clerked for a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, worked as an associate at Wilson Sonsini, and spent several years as a trial and supervisory attorney at Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc. Mr. Burns has tried approximately 50 cases in federal court, and has handled approximately 100 appeals in the Ninth Circuit.

**LAURA CASTILLO** has worked for the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit for over a decade. She is currently the career law clerk to the Hon. John B. Owens. Ms. Castillo also previously served as a law clerk to the Hon. David R. Thompson and the Hon. Gonzalo P. Curiel, a Ninth Circuit staff attorney,

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and as an associate at Paul Hastings LLP. She is a graduate of Pomona College and Stanford Law School.

**SASHA M. CUMMINGS** is a Circuit Mediator for the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Ms. Cummings mediates a wide variety of civil cases, including employment, contract, environmental, insurance, bankruptcy, intellectual property, ERISA and civil rights matters. Prior to her appointment as a Ninth Circuit Mediator, she was a partner at a national law firm, trial attorney, and mediator with 20 years of litigation experience. Her trial practice focused on complex litigated matters in both State and Federal Courts. She has volunteered extensively as a Judge Pro Tem, Settlement Conference Officer, and Mandatory Settlement Conference Panelist. She is an Adjunct Professor at USF School of Law, teaching courses in Mediation and Civil Procedure and currently serves on the UC Hastings Foundation Board of Trustees.

**SUSAN GELMIS** is the Chief Deputy Clerk for Operations at the Ninth Circuit. She has been with the court for 30 years, starting as a Motions Attorney in 1989. In 1992, she became the Supervising Attorney for the newly established Pro Se Unit, which she helped to define and create. In 1993, she worked with the Court and the federal bar to create the Circuit's Pro Bono Program, which she directed for 22 years. She assumed the additional role of Supervising Attorney of the Motions Unit in 2000. Susan has served on numerous Circuit wide committees and task forces relating to prisoner and pro se litigation, and as liaison to the pro se law clerks in the district courts, organizing and speaking at Circuit wide and national conferences. In December 2015, Susan moved to the Clerk's Office to assume her current position as Chief Deputy Clerk, where she oversees all docketing and filing and calendaring systems and procedures, and organizes and speaks at CLE programs around the Circuit. Susan is a 1987 graduate of NYU Law School and originally a native of New York.

**KARA HARTZLER** is an appellate attorney at the Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc. Prior to joining the Federal Defenders, she served as the Legal Director and Criminal Immigration Consultant at the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project in Arizona, where she specialized in the immigration

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consequences of criminal convictions. Kara is the recipient of the 2018 E. Stanley Conant Award, the 2017 Outstanding Assistant Federal Defender award, the 2013 David Carliner Public Interest Award, the 2013 Randy Tunac Courage in Immigration Award, and the 2010 Robert J. Hooker Award for service to the defender community.

**HELEN H. HONG** is currently the Appellate Chief of the Criminal Division at the US Attorney's Office in the Southern District of California. As the Chief, Helen is responsible for reviewing every brief filed in criminal cases by the office and handles her own appellate case load, as well. Helen has been with the US Attorney's Office since 2009, and worked on border crime, child exploitation and civil rights prosecutions before joining the Appellate Section in 2015. Prior to joining the US Attorney's Office, Helen worked in the Federal Programs Branch of the Department of Justice, at Kirkland & Ellis, and clerked for Judge Richard W. Roberts in the District Court for the District of Columbia. Helen received her B.S. and B.A. in Chemistry and Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley, and her law degree from Harvard Law School.

**STEVE HUBACHEK** is a partner in Robbins Geller Rudman & Dowd LLP's San Diego office. His practice concentrates on federal appeals. Prior to joining Robbins Geller, Mr. Hubachek was an associate at Perkins Coie in Seattle, and practiced for many years with Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc. where he served as Chief Appellate Attorney. Mr. Hubachek has argued over 100 appeals, including three cases before the United States Supreme Court and seven cases before en banc panels of the Ninth Circuit.

**HARINI RAGHUPATHI** has been an Appellate Attorney with the Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc. since 2010. She earned her B.S. from Stanford University in 2004 and her J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law in 2007. Before moving to San Diego, Harini clerked for the Honorable R. Guy Cole Jr., Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, in Columbus, Ohio, and then worked for two years as a Skadden Fellow at the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project in San Francisco, California.

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**JOHANNA SCHIAVONI** is a San Diego-based appellate litigator who handles civil appeals in state and federal courts, in addition to criminal appeals for indigent defendants by court appointment. She is a certified specialist in appellate law by the California Board of Legal Specialization and founder of the Law Office of Johanna S. Schiavoni. Before launching her own firm in 2013, Johanna completed two federal judicial clerkships with Hon. Christina A. Snyder (ret.) in the Central District of California (2002-03 term) and Hon. M. Margaret McKeown on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (2006-07 term). She also worked as a trial and appellate litigator at Latham & Watkins LLP in New York and San Diego and was an appellate litigation partner with boutique firm Jacobs & Schlesinger LLP. Johanna, who grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, is a 1998 graduate of Washington University in St. Louis and a 2002 graduate of the UCLA School of Law. She is deeply involved in the San Diego community, serving as President-Elect of the San Diego County Bar Association in 2019, for which organization she will serve as President in 2020. She also is one of nine Board members of the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, which oversees San Diego International Airport.

**SIRI SHETTY** joined Appellate Defenders Inc. in November 2016, after 10 years as a panel attorney. Before joining the ADI panel, she also practiced in federal court as part of the Criminal Justice Act panel. She began her career in indigent defense in 2000, as a trial attorney with Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc.

**RUPA SINGH** handles state and federal civil appeals, writs, and critical motions at San Diego's only appellate boutique, Niddrie Addams Fuller Singh LLP. A former Ninth Circuit Staff Attorney, Rupa has served as co-chair of Appellate Practice at Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP, and handled high-stakes litigation at two Am Law 100 firms—McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP (now Dentons) and Morrison & Foerster LLP. She was founding President of the San Diego Appellate Inn of Court; former chair of the SD County Bar's Appellate Practice Section; and former president of FBA—San Diego. Rupa has been named to Super Lawyers® in Appellate Law since 2016 and *Best Lawyers in America* since 2018. She publishes and speaks on a range of topics, and handles at least one pro bono appeal each year. Rupa has a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, and a J.D. from NYU

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Law School, and clerked for S.D. Cal. District Judge Irma E. Gonzalez (Ret.) and Ninth Circuit Judge M. Margaret McKeown. Rupa is married to a telecom engineer; is the proud mother of three; and, lacking time to pursue real hobbies, enjoys alternately binging on sleep and caffeine.

**ALLISON TAYLOR** manages the Motions Unit of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, where she has been a staff attorney for over 12 years. She specializes in all types of substantive motions in primarily civil and agency cases. Prior to joining the Ninth Circuit, Ms. Taylor spent two years as a trial attorney in immigration court representing the Department of Homeland Security.