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## **News Release**

### Superior Court of California County of San Francisco

Claire A. Williams, Court Executive Officer

# DISCOVERY DEPARTMENTS TO MERGE WITH LAW & MOTION DEPARTMENTS

Budget Cuts, Retirement of Commissioner Leads to Merger of Departments

**SAN FRANCISCO** -- Effective August 25, 2010, the San Francisco Superior Court will suspend Local Rule 10 pursuant to 10.0 (A)(4) to accommodate the merger of its Discovery Departments into Law and Motion Departments, Presiding Judge James J. McBride announced today.

The merger is the result of the retirement of Commissioner William R. Gargano, who retired June 30, 2010, after 31 years with the Court. Judge McBride and Court Executive Officer Claire A. Williams have decided to hold Commissioner Gargano's position vacant to save money. Commissioner Gargano had earned \$151,971 a year.

Judge McBride said the Court and the public should get used to more changes in operations as the Court continues to manage an escalating vacancy rate resulting from a hiring freeze in effect since April 2009 and a \$3 million deficit for the fiscal year that began July 1.

"The Court is going to have to continue to reorganize with a vacancy rate

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approaching 15 percent of 589 authorized positions," Judge McBride said. "We have reached the point where we can no longer operate the same way we did when we were fully staffed.

Last month, the number of vacancies reached 83 positions."

Commissioner Everett Hewlett Jr. will be reassigned from Discovery (Dept. 612) to a Civil assignment in Department 218, which was Commissioner Gargano's assignment. The other Discovery Department, Department 610, has been vacant since January 11, 2010.

Judge Peter J. Busch (Department 301) and Judge Charlotte Walter Woolard (Department 302), who preside over the Court's Law and Motion Departments, will now handle Discovery matters as follows:

- Type the word DISCOVERY in all capitals on the title page of all papers relating to Discovery motions heard in Departments 301 and 302.
- All Discovery motions with odd case numbers will be heard in Department 301. Evennumbered motions will be heard in Department 302.
- All Discovery motions will be heard at 9 a.m. Law and Motion matters will be heard at their regularly scheduled time at 9:30 a.m., Monday through Friday.
- Reserved hearing dates and times set before August 10, 2010 will remain the same.
- Future Discovery Motion calendar dates may be reserved by calling the Discovery clerk at 415.551.3688 Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and Noon.
- Schedule and notice Law and Motion matters pursuant to local Rule 8.2 (A) et seq.
- Order of Examinations will be heard at 2 p.m. in Department 218.
- Ex-parte motions will be heard in Departments 301 and 302 at 11 a.m. Odd– numbered cases will be heard in Department 301 and even-numbered cases will be heard in Department 302.

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- Reservations for Asbestos Discovery Motions shall be made by calling 415.551.3706
   between 1:30 4 p.m.
- Dates for Family Law Discovery Motions shall be set by the Family Law Department at the time of filing.
- Dates for Probate Discovery Motions shall be set by the Probate Department at the time of filing.
- Requests for telephonic appearances shall be made through CourtCall by calling 888.882.6878.

Civil Pitchess motions, which have been handled in the Discovery departments, will be heard in Department 218 at 9 a.m., every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday only.

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