

Superior Court of California County of Santa Clara

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Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara Hosts Successful Color of Justice Event to Inspire Future Legal Leaders

SAN JOSÉ, Calif. (March 3, 2025): On February 27, 2025, the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara proudly hosted its annual *Color of Justice* event, a program designed to inspire and empower youth from all backgrounds to explore careers within the justice system. This year's event saw overwhelming interest, with 79 students in attendance and a waitlist of eager participants, underscoring the critical need for initiatives that foster diversity and representation in the legal field.

The event began with welcoming remarks from Hon. Julie Emede, Presiding Judge, and Hon. Julia Alloggiamento, Chair of the Court Community Outreach Committee and Vice Chair of California's Power of Democracy Steering Committee. The morning's address, delivered by Hon. Micaél P. Estremera, set the tone by emphasizing the importance of early exposure to the legal system and the essential role of diversity in ensuring a more equitable judiciary.

"We are the color of justice—transcending race to embrace gender, heritage, native language, and every aspect of identity that shapes who you are," said Hon. Estremera. "Some of you may feel that your identity is a barrier to becoming a lawyer, probation officer, judge, or police officer. But your identity is not a limitation—it is your strength. You are the future leaders of our legal community."

A compelling panel discussion featuring Byron Suarez, Deputy District Attorney, and Miguel Rodriguez, Deputy Public Defender, provided students with real-life perspectives on overcoming obstacles and pursuing careers in law. These powerful narratives were followed by interactive table discussions, where students engaged directly with mentors from diverse backgrounds, including attorneys, judges, probation officers, and law enforcement professionals.

The program's distinguished keynote speaker, Justice Charles E. Wilson of the Sixth District Court of Appeal, delivered an inspiring address highlighting the significance of inclusion and representation in the legal system. His remarks reinforced the message that diverse voices and perspectives strengthen the judicial process and build greater trust within the community.

“The students attending this event are essential to solving society’s most pressing challenges. Whether it’s criminal justice reform, immigration rights, or privacy in the digital age—the future solutions are in this room,” said Justice Wilson.

Through personal stories and candid discussions, table mentors helped students recognize that pathways into the legal field are accessible to individuals from all walks of life. These conversations aimed to dismantle barriers and encourage young people to consider careers in the justice system—careers they may not have previously envisioned for themselves.

“Every single one of us should remember where we came from, despite the education and career paths we choose. You can be successful in life with anything you do as long as you are passionate. Despite adversities and challenges we may face, just go for it and don’t let anything hold you back,” said a student from Gilroy Early College Academy.

The *Color of Justice* event would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of our partners, whose dedication to recruitment and outreach ensured that a diverse group of students could take part. The Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara extends its deepest gratitude to all who contributed to the success of this event. The Court's Community Outreach Committee acknowledges the generous funding from the California Judges Foundation, whose commitment to enhancing communities across California has been instrumental in making this program possible.

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Figure 1- Hon. Micaél P. Estremera, setting the tone for the day by emphasizing the importance of early exposure to the legal system.



Figure 2- Engaging networking, dynamic collaboration, and insightful discussions are unfolding.



Figure 3- Students in discussion with their assigned mentor for the event.



Figure 4- Panelists Byron Suarez, Deputy District Attorney and Miguel Rodriguez, Deputy Public Defender.



Figure 5- Student from Gilroy Early College Academy offering words of encouragement.



Figure 6- Justice Charles E. Wilson of the Sixth District Court of Appeal photographed with a student from Lincoln Law School.



Figure 7- Attendees of the Color of Justice event.



Figure 8- Mentors for the event standing as a testament to how far they have come versus where they started.



Figure 9- Hon. Julia Alloggiamento, Justice Charles E. Wilson, and Hon. Micaél P. Estremera