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Color of Justice: Imagine Your Path to Justice

Santa Clara County Superior Court hosted an engaging day for youth on overcoming barriers and being part of our justice system

SAN JOSÉ, Calif. (February 27, 2023): On Thursday, February 23, 2023, the Santa Clara County Superior Court Community Outreach Committee hosted the Superior Court's third Color of Justice program. The Color of Justice Program is designed to promote diversity in the legal profession and in the justice system as a whole, and to provide students, who may or may not have previously envisioned a career in law, a greater understanding of the many pathways and opportunities available to them within the legal field.

"Making sure the justice system mirrors the makeup of our society is one way we can build confidence in the idea that the system is not for or against any one group of people, but instead pursues justice for all," said Hon. Julia Alloggiamento, Chair of the Court Community Outreach Committee. "The Color of Justice event is designed to broaden the perspective of youth by exposing them to various professions such as judges, attorneys, social workers, probation officers, law enforcement, youth justice advocates and more. By hearing the heartfelt and real stories of panelists who worked their way into a position in the legal system despite significant life challenges, we hoped that students would be able to envision themselves in these roles that have the potential to improve outcomes for individuals, as well as increase trust and confidence in the administration of justice."

Attendees included a wide range of students located throughout the County of Santa Clara, from eighth graders to high school students. As the host of the event and City of San Jose native, Hon. Julia Alloggiamento started the day by highlighting the changes in the makeup of individuals working in the justice system just during her lifetime, before moving the event into courtroom observations. Throughout the course of the event, intimate discussions among students and small group leaders who were hand selected based on their role within the County's justice system were overheard, conveying commitments to achieve personal goals and brainstorming approaches to accomplish them. Two panel discussions were offered, the first focusing on the life paths of the panelists involved, followed by a panel promoting resources and programs available to youth. Panelists included Judges, members of the Public Defenders and the District Attorney's Offices, the Probation Department, law enforcement, and numerous organizations dedicated to promoting student education and diversity in the legal profession (see below). The personal pathways to careers within the justice system presented by the panelists demonstrated to students that despite personal challenges and vulnerabilities, success in one's endeavors is within reach.

Associate Justice Charles Edward Wilson, the Sixth District Court of Appeal remarked during his keynote speech, "We are very lucky in the State of California to have a very diverse population. Every race, national origin, and religious affiliation are represented in our communities. But when you look in our courtrooms and law offices, you wouldn't necessarily know you were in the State of California. So when I see an audience like this, with so many diverse and wonderful students, I say to myself – 'this is our opportunity to have more diversity in the room (justice system).'"

The Superior Court is grateful to all of our attendees, panelists, and organizations that helped make this event happen. Special thanks to [Lincoln Law School](#), [Pathways to Law](#), and the [Silicon Valley Urban Debate League \(SVUDL\)](#). The Court's Community Outreach Committee received funding for this event from the California Judges Foundation, an invaluable supporter of strengthening the State of California's communities.

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Color of Justice Event participants, small group leaders and justice partners.



Hon. Johnny Gogo with high school student.



Students and adult chaperones from the County of Santa Clara.



Keynote Speaker – Associate Justice Charles E. Wilson



“Resources” Panelists



“Life Path” Panelists



**Judge Julia Alloggiamento,
Chair of the County of Santa Clara's Superior Court Community Outreach Committee**



Hon. Julia Alloggiamento addressing approximately 40 high school students.

Panelist and Speaker Biographies



Judge Julia Alloggiamento Community Outreach Committee Chair

The Honorable Julia Alloggiamento was born and raised in San Jose, California. After graduating from UCLA for undergrad and University of California, Hastings College of Law for law school (newly renamed to UC Law SF), she clerked for the Federal District Court in Los Angeles and then worked for several years at Morrison & Foerster as a litigation associate. She served as a Deputy District Attorney in Santa Clara County from 1998 through 2010, where she prosecuted a variety of crimes, including domestic violence, narcotics, and homicide. For several years, she acted as the “Community Prosecutor” where she focused on crime prevention and intervention. In that role, she helped bring the nationally acclaimed “Parent Project” to Santa Clara County, a program which focuses on giving parents the tools to change the destructive behavior of their adolescents. She was sworn in as a Superior Court Judge in January 2011. Judge Alloggiamento previously presided over misdemeanors, drug court, Juvenile Justice, Mental Health Court, hearing matters related to competency to stand trial and civil commitment so the mentally ill in a criminal setting, and Felony Criminal trials where she heard cases involving homicide, gang crimes, sexual

assaults, and other serious felonies. Her current assignment as of January 2023 is in a Civil Trial Department. Judge Alloggiamento has been Chair of the Court Community Outreach Committee since 2012. The Outreach Committee provides outreach and education regarding a variety of issues related to the justice system and plans programs for students and adults including the Color of Justice, Young Women's Power Lunch, Educators Day, Read Across America, Law Day, and more. She also serves on numerous other court committees, including the Equality and Social Justice Committee, the Court Strategic Planning Committee, and the New Judicial Officer Bridging Committee. She also serves on Statewide Committees including the California Judges Association Wellness Committee and was appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of California in 2022 to serve on the Judicial Council's Power of Democracy Steering Committee. In 2016, Judge Alloggiamento was recognized as the special honoree at the SCCBA Women's Lawyers' Section Annual Reception Honoring Santa Clara County Women Judges.

Life Path Panelists



Byron Suarez, Deputy District Attorney, Santa Clara District Attorney's Office

Byron Suarez was born in Guatemala City, Guatemala and immigrated to the United States when he was just 5 years old. Mr. Suarez's family settled in the Eastside of San Jose, where he graduated from Overfelt High School. Mr. Suarez went on to serve eight years as a Hospital Corpsman in the U.S. Navy, including a combat deployment with Third Battalion Seventh Marines during the Iraq War. While still actively serving in the U.S. Navy, Mr. Suarez obtained his bachelor's degree from Fresno Pacific University. After his services in the military Mr. Suarez went on to receive his law degree from Golden Gate University School of Law. From 2012 to 2016, Mr. Suarez was a Juvenile Hall counselor in San Francisco where he provided counseling related to the physical, emotional, and social development of detained juveniles. Mr. Suarez also served as a San Jose police officer, where he was a patrol officer in the

East Side of San Jose, where he grew up. Mr. Suarez is currently a Deputy District Attorney with the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office and is currently assigned to the Community Prosecution Unit.

Jonathan Mosby, Felony Trial Team Supervisor, Santa Clara County Public Defender's Office

Jonathan Mosby has been an attorney in the Santa Clara County Public defender's office since 1999. In 2020 he accepted a promotion to become a Felony trial team supervisor. Jonathan has spent many years defending indigent and incarcerated clients. He has represented many clients charged with offenses that carry the possibility of being locked up for the rest of their natural life. He takes great pride in being a zealous advocate and treating his clients with the same respect that he gives to the court. His assignments have varied from working in the juvenile justice system to being a member of the Homicide team.

Jonathan is a graduate of California State University of Chico, where he received his bachelor's degree in political science. He received his Law degree from New College School of law.



Deserie Loredo Escobar, Supervising Probation Officer, Probation Department

My name is Deserie Loredo Escobar. I was born and raised in San Jose and attended public education until I graduated from Mt. Pleasant High School.

I openly speak to students about the academic struggles I experienced throughout my educational journey, including the lack of encouragement I received from guidance counselors and teachers. However, I also share that it only takes one person to believe in you to follow your dreams. In my case, although I was not the best student in her class, my high school Spanish teacher told me my grades did not define who I was or where I was going in my life, and she encouraged me to follow my dreams.

My dream job was to become a Social Worker. Having been surrounded by family members “in the system,” I often found myself struggling with decisions the Court system made. I went to San Jose State University and earned my Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work.

I worked several jobs to pay for college (San Jose State University). While working for the Board of Supervisors, City of San Jose, and Children’s Shelter, my passion for advocating for youth only strengthened. I eventually transitioned to the Probation Department as a Counselor (working at Juvenile Hall and the Juvenile Rehabilitation Facility), a Probation Officer and ultimately a Supervising Probation Officer, where I’ve been working with youth my whole career (over 24 years). I am a member of the San Jose Rotary and I also founded a Women’s Support Network for Probation Staff, Probation-Women Out of Work (P-WOW).

My passion continues to be working with our community’s youth and continue the message to follow their dreams.



Robert Casas, Deputy, Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Office

Born and raised in San Jose California, I am one of nine children to Mexican immigrant parents. Unfortunately my parents were regular drug users and due to an abundance of neglect and abuse, I was placed into Foster Care. I was very fortunate in that my very first family was a perfect fit for me.

In 2005 I joined the Marine Corps, where I served my country for eight years and completed multiple combat tours to Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2020 I was offered a position with the Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Office as a Deputy Sheriff. It has been a great honor and privilege to have had the opportunity to continue serving the citizens of my community and country once again. I believe my background has

afforded me a very unique perspective that has been incredibly beneficial to serving the community that saved my life.

Resource Panelists



Rolland Janairo, Executive Director, Silicon Valley Urban Debate League

Rolland Janairo is the Executive Director of the Silicon Valley Urban Debate League. Born and raised in New York City to parents who immigrated from the Philippines, Rolland has developed a deep appreciation for the transformative power of education as a product of the NYC public school system. While attending and after graduating from Brown University, Rolland volunteered and taught at a preschool in Providence, Rhode Island. He later earned his Masters Degree in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

During his time in Boston, Rolland was the Associate Director of Teacher Development at Jumpstart for Young Children, as well as the Director of Playmaker Operations at Life is Good Playmakers. Prior to joining SVUDL, Rolland served as the Chief Operating Officer at World Savvy. Across all of these roles, Rolland's focus has been on supporting students to reach their full potential by empowering the caring adults around them to do the same.

Rolland also serves as Treasurer of the Board of the Directors of the Thrive Alliance of Nonprofits of San Mateo County, as well as the Vice President of the Board of Directors for the California Association of Urban Debate Leagues. He is a graduated Fellow of the Silicon Valley Multicultural Awards Program, as well as a graduated IDEA Fellow of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Silicon Valley Chapter. He is also a Senior Fellow faculty member with the Institute of Nonprofit Practice. In his spare time, Rolland enjoys running, cooking, and exploring the Bay Area with his wife and two young boys.



Pamela Enslin, Executive Director of California LAW Pathways

Pamela Enslin is the Executive Director of California LAW Pathways. Pamela has been a mediator, arbitrator, counselor and litigator with extensive experience in higher education, employment, civil rights, and commercial matters. She most recently was a partner with Warner Norcross & Judd, where she chaired the firm's Higher Education Practice Group. Pamela provided dispute resolution services as an advocate and as a neutral mediator and arbitrator in litigation and pre-litigation matters. Having been a former federal defender, Pamela has conducted numerous internal investigations. She is active in the American Bar Association, where she currently

serves on the Board of Governors. She has also served as Chair of the Section of Dispute Resolution, and has acted as the DR Section's Delegate to the ABA House of Delegates since 2000. Just prior to serving an earlier term as a member of the ABA Board of Governors, Pamela in 2013 traveled to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba as the ABA's official observer of trial proceedings for the alleged organizers of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, DC. She was one of only eight NGO observers allowed to observe the proceedings. She has received numerous awards, including the Nanci S. Klein Award from the Michigan State Bar, the YWCA's Lifetime Woman of Achievement Award, and the Woman of Courage and Achievement Award from Michigan Women's Foundation. She has twice been named a Michigan Lawyer of the Year. Pamela taught mediation and negotiation in law school, and is the author of a book and numerous articles on dispute resolution.



Laura Palazzolo, Dean Emeritus, Lincoln Law School

Laura Palazzolo served as the Dean of Lincoln Law School of San Jose from 2015 through 2022 and continues to serve the school as Dean Emeritus, managing special programs such as the school's Peer Court, as well as its Intellectual Property and Small Business Clinics. Prior to becoming Dean, Ms. Palazzolo was a Senior Litigation Associate at Berliner Cohen, where she wrote several appellate briefs for the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, and prepared cases for trial valued in excess of \$40 million. The Silicon Valley Business Journal named Dean Palazzolo a Silicon Valley Woman of Influence in 2017. Dean Palazzolo was born and raised in San Jose and is a proud graduate of San Jose State

University. She earned her JD at Lincoln Law School of San Jose, where she has taught multiple courses over the past twenty years designed to help Lincoln students pass the California Bar Exam and become practicing attorneys.



Judge Johnny Cepeda Gogo

Judge Johnny Cepeda Gogo was appointed to the Superior Court of California by Governor Gavin Newsom and was sworn in on December 6, 2019. Judge Gogo stays involved with the community by visiting classrooms and colleges, participating in the Santa Clara County High School Mock Trial Tournament and by mentoring college and law students.

Judge Gogo has also participated in presentations/lectures or taught at Lincoln Law School of San Jose, Santa Clara University School of Law, Stanford Law School, San Jose City College, West Valley College, Evergreen Valley College and Contra Costa College. Judge Gogo is currently assigned to handle felony criminal trials.

Keynote Speaker



Associate Justice Charles E. Wilson

Associate Justice Charles Edward Wilson was appointed to the Sixth District Court of Appeal by Governor Gavin Newsom in August 2021.

Prior to his elevation to the Court of Appeal, Justice Wilson served on the Santa Clara County Superior Court for seven years. During his tenure with the trial court, he served as the Supervising Judge for the Family Violence Division and Supervising Judge for the Palo Alto Courthouse. In addition, Justice Wilson has served as a faculty member for Witkin Judicial College, the Domestic Violence Institute, and the Assigned Judges Conference. He has also served as a contributor for the California Judges Benchbook: Domestic Violence Cases (CJER).

Prior to his appointment to the bench, Justice Wilson worked as a civil attorney handling complex litigation. Later, as a Deputy District Attorney, he developed extensive trial experience litigating matters ranging from murder to property crimes.

Justice Wilson received his BA in Political Science from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He received his JD from the University of San Francisco (USF) School of Law and MBA from the University of San Francisco School of Management.