United States District Court
Northern District of California

Consenting to the Jurisdiction of a Magistrate Judge

Oakland

San Francisco

San Jose

Eureka-McKinleyville

Richard Seeborg
Chief District Judge

Mark B. Busby
Clerk of Court

United States District Court
Northern District of California

Richard Seeborg
Chief District Judge

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Clerk of Court

San Francisco Courthouse
450 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102

(415) 522-2000

Oakland Courthouse
1301 Clay Street, Suite 400S
Oakland, California 94612-5212

(510) 637-3530

San Jose Courthouse
280 South First Street, Room 2112
San Jose, California 95113

(408) 535-5363

Eureka-McKinleyville Courthouse
3140 Boeing Avenue
McKinleyville, California 95519

(707) 445-3612

A Message from the Chief Judge of the United States District Court

As you embark on civil litigation in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California—whether as a party to a lawsuit or as an attorney—I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the range of services provided by the court's magistrate judges and especially to consider consenting to have a magistrate judge handle all aspects of your case, up to and including dispositive motions, jury or court trial, and the entry of judgment.

The Northern District was one of the first federal trial courts in the country to assign a wide range of civil cases directly to magistrate judges upon filing. As a consequence, the magistrate judges of our district have direct experience with nearly all types of civil matters filed in our court. Because our court is very busy, agreeing to proceed before a magistrate judge often means that the case will be resolved more quickly than if the case remained before a district judge. If the case must be tried, your trial date will be more certain and less likely to be continued to accommodate a felony jury trial. While consent is customarily given soon after a case is filed, parties may consent to have a magistrate judge preside over their case at any point in the proceedings.

Every magistrate judge in the Northern District underwent a highly competitive selection process and had years of experience before being appointed to the bench.

As the following biographies demonstrate, many magistrate judges in our district are active in law school teaching and continuing legal education for attorneys. Many have been appointed to important committees within the circuit and national governing bodies, and all are active in local court governance.

Each has been appointed based on detailed, confidential feedback from the bar and the community, and each is equipped to handle the full range of issues presented to our court. Combined, the Northern District's magistrate judges bring thousands of hours of federal judicial experience to their work at our court.

Richard Seeborg
Chief Judge

How Consent Jurisdiction Works

Under a law passed by Congress in 1976, the parties in a civil action in federal district court have the option of consenting to have the case handled by a United States magistrate judge. Magistrate judges are appointed by the district judges of each district court following a competitive merit selection process and serve for terms of eight years. Magistrate judges may be reappointed only after a rigorous review of their work that includes community input. In contrast, district judges are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate and serve without term limits.

With the exception of certain types of cases (including capital habeas corpus cases, securities class actions, and bankruptcy appeals), when a civil action is filed in the Northern District of California, it is randomly assigned to either a district judge or a magistrate judge. For every case assigned to a magistrate judge, all parties (that is, all plaintiffs and all defendants) are asked to consent to have the case handled by a magistrate judge all the way through trial. The parties are encouraged to make a decision regarding magistrate judge jurisdiction as soon as possible and no later than the first case management conference (about 100 days after the case is filed). If any party does not consent, the case is reassigned to a district judge.

If all parties consent to magistrate judge jurisdiction, then the assigned magistrate judge presides over all aspects of the case and any appeals from the magistrate judge's rulings are made directly to the Court of Appeals.

Sometimes cases initially assigned to district judges are reassigned to magistrate judges because all parties consent to magistrate judge jurisdiction. The district judge may invite the parties at the initial case management conference to consider consenting to the jurisdiction of a magistrate judge, and the parties may take that opportunity to do so.

The magistrate judges of the Northern District handle hundreds of civil cases every year. Each magistrate judge has an assigned courtroom and dedicated staff, including a courtroom deputy and law clerks. Because of their diverse professional experiences before and during their service as judges, this court's magistrate judges are well-qualified to preside over all types of civil litigation.

Laws and Court Rules on Magistrate Judge Jurisdiction

* Federal Magistrate Act of 1979, 28 U.S.C § 636(c)(1)
* Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 73
* Northern District of California Civil Local Rule 73

Magistrate Judge Biographies

San Francisco Courthouse

Magistrate Judge **Laurel Beeler**

Magistrate Judge **Lisa J. Cisneros**

Magistrate Judge **Thomas S. Hixson**

Magistrate Judge **Peter H. Kang**

Magistrate Judge **Sallie Kim**

Magistrate Judge **Joseph Spero**

Magistrate Judge **Alex G. Tse**

Oakland Courthouse

Chief Magistrate Judge **Donna M. Ryu**

Magistrate Judge **Kandis Westmore**

San Jose Courthouse

Magistrate Judge **Nathanael Cousins**

Magistrate Judge **Virginia K. DeMarchi**

Magistrate Judge **Susan van Keulen**

Eureka-McKinleyville Courthouse

Magistrate Judge **Robert M. Illman**

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Laurel Beeler

San Francisco Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2010

Magistrate Judge Laurel Beeler was appointed in 2010 to the Northern District of California. She has presided as a trial and settlement judge over hundreds of civil cases, including intellectual-property, employment, civil-rights, and commercial disputes.

Before joining the court, Judge Beeler was an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Northern District, prosecuting complex white-collar cases with parallel civil components. She was the Office's Professional Responsibility Officer and Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division. She was a law clerk to the Honorable Cecil F. Poole, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. She trained as a mediator with the Northern District's ADR Program, the Federal Judicial Center, and Harvard Law School.

Judge Beeler is a member of the Ninth Circuit Conference Executive Committee. She is one of four judges on the U.S. Department of Justice/Office of Defender Services Joint Electronic Technology Working Group. She chairs the Northern District's Criminal Practice Committee, implemented the court's reentry and diversion courts, and, with United States District Judge Haywood S. Gilliam, Jr., implemented and facilitates the court's Racial Justice Working Group.

Judge Beeler was President of the Federal Bar Association for the Northern District, co-chair of the Lawyer Representatives to the Ninth Circuit, a board member of the Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF), and a member of the Ninth Circuit's Jury Trial Improvement Committee. She is a member of BASF's Criminal Justice Task Force and the Executive Committee of the Edward J. McFetridge American Inn of Court. Judge Beeler was named one of The Recorder's 2012 Women Leaders in Law and received the Northern District Judicial Conference's Public Service Award, BASF's Barristers Choice Award, the Federal Bar Association's Inaugural Chapter Achievement award, and the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association's 2018 Federal Judge of the Year award.

Judge Beeler taught Civil Trial Practice at U.C. Berkeley School of Law and Criminal Procedure at U.C. Hastings College of the Law. She has led rule-of-law projects in Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, Jordan, Ukraine, Turkey, Thailand, and the Philippines.

Judge Beeler graduated with honors from the University of Washington School of Law, where she was Order of the Coif and an Articles Editor on the Washington Law Review. She received her A.B. with honors from Bowdoin College.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Lisa J. Cisneros

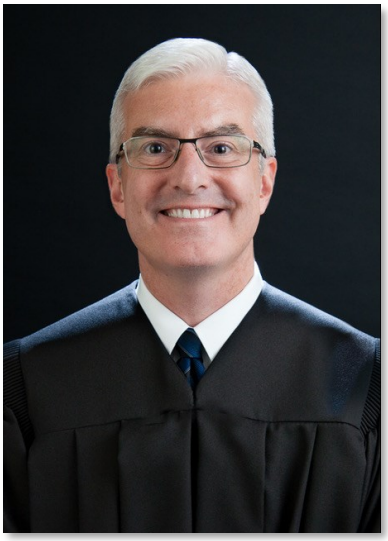
San Francisco Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2022

Magistrate Judge Lisa J. Cisneros joined the Court following fifteen years of practice as a litigator and attorney in government and public service.

Prior to taking the bench, Judge Cisneros served as a Deputy Attorney General for the California Department of Justice. As part of the Department's Civil Rights Enforcement Section, she represented the State of California and its agencies in complex affirmative and defensive litigation, primarily in the federal trial and appellate courts.

Judge Cisneros began her legal career at California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA), where she created and directed the LGBT Program, which provides representation and advocacy for low-income LGBT individuals in rural areas. Judge Cisneros then served as a law clerk for U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken of this Court for two years. Following her clerkship, Judge Cisneros practiced at Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein, LLP, where she represented employees and consumers in mass tort, class action, and antitrust cases. She also maintained an active pro bono practice, including writing amicus briefs to the federal circuit courts and the Supreme Court and serving on the board of the National Center for Lesbian Rights. Her work as an attorney was recognized by the National LGBT Bar Association, the Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom and the California Attorney General. In addition to her law practice, Judge Cisneros was appointed by the Governor as a member of the California Fair Employment & Housing Council, where she promulgated regulations and conducted hearings.

Judge Cisneros earned her law degree from UC Berkeley School of Law and her undergraduate degree with honors from Brown University.



MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Thomas S. Hixson

San Francisco Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2018

Magistrate Judge Thomas S. Hixson joined the Court in 2018 following nearly 20 years as a litigator in private practice in San Francisco.

Before taking the bench, Magistrate Judge Hixson was a partner at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, LLP, and before then an associate and then partner at Bingham McCutchen LLP, and prior to that an associate at McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enersen, LLP. His practice encompassed complex litigation in federal and state courts in fields including intellectual property, antitrust and unfair competition, energy regulation, water management and telecommunications.

Magistrate Judge Hixson is a past chair of the California State Bar Antitrust and Unfair Competition Law Section (now the Antitrust, UCL and Privacy Section of the California Lawyers Association).

He has contributed to the Section's treatise, California State Antitrust & Unfair Competition Law, published by Matthew Bender. His pro bono work while in private practice included serving as counsel in a complex challenge to telecommunications marketing practices before the California Public Utilities Commission and assisting tenants facing eviction via the San Francisco Superior Court's Housing Negotiation Project. He also served on the Board of Directors of the AIDS Legal Referral Panel.

Magistrate Judge Hixson earned his undergraduate and law degrees, both magna cum laude, from Harvard. The year after graduating from law school, he served as a law clerk to Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge A. Wallace Tashima in Pasadena.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
PETER H. KANG

San Francisco Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2023

Magistrate Judge Peter H. Kang joined the Court in 2023 following a career of over thirty-two years of practice as a trial attorney and litigator in California and courts nationwide. Over the course of his career, he entered appearances in well over 100 complex civil cases in federal courts and the U.S. International Trade Commission, and he served as trial counsel in 17 bench and jury trials (of these, he served as lead trial counsel in 8 trials to verdict).

Prior to taking the bench, Judge Kang was a Partner in the Silicon Valley office of an AmLaw 100 law firm, where he served as senior trial counsel and head of the firm's First-Generation Professionals group. Judge Kang started his career in private practice at an IP boutique in San Jose, CA, eventually serving as Managing Partner of that firm's San Francisco office. Following that position, he was a Partner at an AmLaw 15 international law firm's San Francisco office and later became one of the founding partners of that firm's Palo Alto office. While in private practice, Judge Kang litigated primarily in federal courts nationwide, the U.S. ITC, and the Patent Trial & Appeal Board, including patent, IP, antitrust, contract, product defect, unfair business practices/unfair competition, employment, and false advertising cases. Immediately after graduating from law school, he served as Law Clerk for United States District Judge Ernest C. Torres of the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island.

While in private practice, Judge Kang was a member of the Panel of Arbitrators of the American Arbitration Association. He served as Settlement Conference Officer for the San Francisco Superior Court in over a dozen cases. He presided as Judge *pro tempore* and as Court-appointed Arbitrator in Santa Clara County Superior Court, including a case in which the parties adopted his arbitrator's decision as a judgment of the court. He also served as a Court-appointed Mediator in patent lawsuits. He has served as an Early Settlement Conference Neutral for Santa Clara County Superior Court in over 15 cases. His work as a mediator and neutral covered a wide range of cases, including breach of contract, real estate, construction, personal property, trade secret, commercial paper, financing/banking, and personal injury cases.

Judge Kang previously served as pro bono counsel in civil rights litigation, immigration/asylum matters, and other cases including veterans' benefits, record expungement under "clean slate" laws, and EMTALA claims against a hospital. He was a nominee for the State Bar of California's Pro Bono Award. He won the Sixth Annual Computer/Law Writing Competition, and he authored a #1 ranked treatise on litigation in the U.S. International Trade Commission. Among other recognitions, he has been ranked by the *Legal 500*, *Who's Who Legal*, and *Chambers* since 2014 (including multiple Band 1 rankings). He was a Senior Fellow of Litigation Counsel of America, and he received the Asian-American Bar Association's Commitment to Diversity Award. He served as President of the International Association of Korean Lawyers and on the Board of the Asia-Pacific American Bar Association of Silicon Valley. Judge Kang has spoken on litigation and trials, intellectual property (particularly patent law), technology, licensing/transactions, pro bono, and diversity issues at international conferences and at Stanford Law School, Berkeley School of Law, Columbia Law School, and Harvard Business School. His previously published articles have been cited in a federal court opinion, in scholarly journals, and in law school curricula.

Judge Kang received his B.S. in Industrial Engineering (1987) and his B.A. in Classics (1986) from Stanford University, where he received both the Fairclough Award and the Senior Prize. His undergraduate education includes coursework at Stanford Law School, Brown University, and the University of London's Institut Brittanique in Paris (Certificate of Merit 1985). He graduated from Georgetown University Law Center, *cum laude*, in 1990 where he served as a Law Fellow and as Head Coach of the Wagner Moot Court Team (which he led to the national quarterfinals). He is a member of the California Bar and is registered to practice before the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Sallie Kim

San Francisco Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2015

Magistrate Judge Sallie Kim brings a broad range of civil and criminal litigation experience to the bench, with a special emphasis on civil cases in federal court.

Judge Kim graduated from Princeton University in 1986 and from Stanford Law School in 1989. Upon graduation from law school, she served as law clerk to United States District Judge Spencer Williams of this Court. She then entered private civil litigation practice in Palo Alto. From 1995-99, Judge Kim served as Associate and Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at Stanford Law School, after which she returned to private civil litigation practice and became a partner with the law firm of GCA Law Partners, LLP in 2002. She practiced at GCA Law Partners until she joined the Court in 2015.

Judge Kim's recent professional activities outside of regular civil litigation practice have included service in the following capacities: Co-Director of the Trial Advocacy Program and Lecturer in Law at Stanford Law School beginning in 2014; the Interim Title IX Coordinator for Stanford University in 2013 and 2014; and Volunteer Deputy District Attorney for Santa Clara County for 14 weeks in 2010.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Joseph C. Spero

San Francisco Courthouse
Year Appointed: 1999

Magistrate Judge Joseph C. Spero was appointed in 1999, and has presided as trial judge in criminal and civil cases in a variety of subject areas, including patent, employ-ment, civil rights, commercial contract, trademark, and federal misdemeanor cases. He has also served as a settlement judge in over 1500 cases.

Judge Spero has served on the Court's Executive Committee, as Chair of the Court's Reentry Committee and of the Diversion Committee, as Chair of the Court's Technology Committee, and as Liaison Judge for Pretrial Services and Probation. He also has served on various circuit and national committees including the Magistrate Judges

Advisory Group of the Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Magistrate Judge Executive Board and the Capital Case Committee of the Ninth Circuit.

A 1981 graduate of Columbia University School of Law, he clerked for the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. He worked as an associate at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, and as associate then partner at Coblentz, Cahen, McCabe & Breyer (now Coblentz, Patch, Duffy & Bass).

While in private practice, he trained as a mediator at Harvard Law School and served as a mediator in the Northern District's Alternative Dispute Resolution Program. He also served as a Judge Pro-Tem for the San Francisco County Superior Court.

Judge Spero served as pro bono counsel in a variety of cases. He received the Thurgood Marshall Award from the Bar Association of the City of New York.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Alex G. Tse

San Francisco Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2020

Magistrate Judge Alex G. Tse joined the Court in January 2020 after serving nearly twenty years in various positions with the United States Attorney's Office, including an interim appointment as the United States Attorney for the Northern District of California. Judge Tse began his legal career in 1990 in private practice.

In 1994, he became an Assistant United States Attorney in the Civil Division, where he defended the federal government in civil cases, and pursued civil actions against defendants who defrauded the government.

In 2001, Judge Tse became a Deputy Chief of the Civil Division. In late 2006, Judge Tse left the United States Attorney's Office and in 2007 took a position as an Assistant Chief City Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco, where he led the team of Deputy City Attorneys charged with investigating and abating public nuisances. In late 2012, Judge Tse returned to the U.S. Attorney's Office as the Chief of the Civil Division. In 2016, he received a Special Commendation from the Civil Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, and he received a Director's Award for Superior Performance from the Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys in 2017.

Prior to joining the bench, he served on various court committees in the Northern District of California, and served for several years as a volunteer court appointed mediator and early neutral evaluator. Judge Tse is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, and of the University of California, Hastings College of the Law.

CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Donna M. Ryu

Oakland Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2010

Magistrate Judge Donna M. Ryu joined the Northern District bench in March 2010, and has presided over consent cases in a wide variety of fields, including commercial disputes, intellectual property, employment, civil rights, consumer, environmental, maritime, and constitutional law. She conducts settlement conferences in all major practice areas, and manages discovery in complex matters, including multi-district litigation. Judge Ryu has served on numerous court committees, including Local Rules, Subcommittee on E-Discovery, and Pro Bono Projects, among others. She also co-presides over the Oakland Reentry Court.

Judge Ryu began her career as a commercial litigator at a large San Francisco firm before specializing in employment class actions as a named partner in a small firm. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Ryu was a Clinical Professor of Law at U.C. College of the Law, San Francisco, and before that at Golden Gate University Law School.

She has been honored as a California Lawyer of the Year in Employment Law. She is the recipient of the Asian American Bar Association's Joe Morozumi Award for Exceptional Legal Advocacy, the Rutter Award for Excellence in Teaching, and the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association's Trailblazers Award. She co-designed a national training institute on class actions, and has written and lectured in the areas of employment law, e-discovery, pretrial practice, attorneys' fees, class actions, ethics, and professionalism.

Judge Ryu graduated with honors from Yale University and received her law degree in from U.C. Berkeley Law School.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Kandis A. Westmore

Oakland Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2012

Magistrate Judge Kandis A. Westmore was appointed in February 2012. Judge Westmore has presided over a wide variety of consent cases, including contracts and commercial law, civil rights, employment, patent and trademark infringement, securities, administrative and constitutional law, immigration, environmental, and personal injury. She also conducts settlement conferences and manages discovery, including in nationwide class actions and multi-district litigation. Judge Westmore currently serves on the court's Community Outreach Committee and co-leads the court's Convictions Alternatives Program (CAP).

Judge Westmore served as a law clerk with the Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office, before beginning her legal career at an Oakland-based boutique law firm specializing in plaintiffs' civil rights litigation.

She joined the Oakland City Attorney's Office in 1999 as a Deputy City Attorney. During her 13-year tenure with the City, she advised City agencies and served as both a trial attorney and a law and motion attorney, where she filed suit on behalf of the City and defended the City and its employees on a wide range of matters in federal and state trial and appellate courts, including civil rights, personal injury, inverse condemnation, labor and employment, and complex litigation. Judge Westmore has been publicly recognized by community organizations, the City of Oakland, and elected officials for her contributions and service to the City of Oakland and its residents.

Prior to taking the bench, Judge Westmore served as President-Elect of the Alameda County Bar Association (ACBA) and volunteered for the ACBA Volunteer Legal Services Corporation's Pro Bono Program representing low-income individuals in family law cases. She also served as the President of the Earl Warren American Inns of Court in 2017. Judge Westmore received the Charles Houston Bar Association Guardian of Justice Award in 2018 and the Black Women Lawyers of Northern California Judicial Excellence Award in 2022.

She received her B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, and her J.D. from the University of San Francisco, School of Law, all while working full-time and being a wife and mother of two young children. As a law student, Judge Westmore served as a judicial extern to the Honorable Saundra Brown Armstrong. From 2018 to 2021, Judge Westmore was an adjunct professor at the Golden Gate University School of Law, where she taught Honors Evidence.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Nathanael Cousins

San Jose Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2011

Magistrate Judge Nathanael Cousins has his chambers in San Jose, but he has served in each courthouse in the Northern District of California, from Salinas to Eureka.

He joined the Court from the U.S. Department of Justice, where he worked as an Assistant U.S. Attorney (San Jose and San Francisco offices) and Antitrust Division Trial Attorney (San Francisco). In those positions, he had criminal jury trials before many of the Judges of this Court. He was part of the team that prosecuted global price-fixing cartels in memory chip markets. He also coordinated Operation Ceasefire, a community program to reduce gang violence in Monterey County.

Immediately before joining the Department of Justice, he worked as a civil litigation associate and then partner in the Chicago office of Kirkland & Ellis, and before that he was a litigation associate in the Los Angeles office of Greenberg Glusker. His civil litigation cases focused on antitrust, class actions, consumer fraud, securities fraud, and civil rights. He was pro bono class counsel for inmates at an Illinois state prison.

Judge Cousins graduated from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law. After law school, he clerked for the Hon. F.A. Little, Jr., Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court, Western District of Louisiana. He received his undergraduate degree in political science from Stanford. While in school, he studied abroad in Russia and the Netherlands.

Judge Cousins has taught legal writing, moot court, and antitrust law at Hastings, and participates regularly in moot court and trial training programs at Bay Area law schools. He also coaches basketball and soccer.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Virginia K. DeMarchi

San Jose Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2018

Magistrate Judge Virginia DeMarchi joined the court in 2018 after 22 years as a litigator in private practice in Silicon Valley.

Before taking the bench, Magistrate Judge DeMarchi was a partner with Fenwick & West LLP where she represented technology and life sciences companies in patent infringement and other intellectual property matters in a wide range of industries, including e-commerce, computer hardware and software, industrial enzymes, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, financial services, communications, and consumer products. She also served as general counsel to the firm and as a member of the executive committee.

In addition to her private law practice, Magistrate Judge DeMarchi served for nearly 10 years on the board of directors for the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley and has been active in pro bono representation of federal and state inmates and victims of domestic violence.

Before joining Fenwick & West, Magistrate Judge DeMarchi served for two years as a trial attorney with the Civil Division of the United States Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. and clerked for District Judge Steven J. McAuliffe in the District of New Hampshire. Magistrate Judge DeMarchi earned her law degree cum laude from Harvard Law School and her undergraduate degree with honors from Stanford University.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Susan van Keulen

San Jose Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2017

Magistrate Judge Susan van Keulen joined the Court following 28 years as a commercial and intellectual property litigator in Silicon Valley.

Magistrate Judge van Keulen's private law practice focused substantially on intellectual property cases in federal and state courts and in private arbitrations, with particular experience handling technology and commercial disputes involving semiconductor, computer, and electronics technologies. Magistrate Judge van Keulen prepared dozens of cases for trial and served as lead trial counsel in a number of cases in the Northern District.

As an active part of her practice, she also regularly represented pro bono clients in cases involving landlord-tenant disputes, immigration issues and legal remedies for domestic violence.

In addition to her active law practice, Magistrate Judge van Keulen served on the Northern District's Patent Local Rules Advisory Subcommittee from 2006 to 2014 and has lectured and written widely on patent law and federal procedure.

Magistrate Judge van Keulen graduated from the University of California, Davis and UCLA School of Law. She practiced law with the Thelen law firm (1988-2008) and as a partner with O'Melveny & Myers (2008-2016) until taking the bench.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Robert M. Illman

Eureka-McKinleyville Courthouse
Year Appointed: 2017

Magistrate Judge Robert M. Illman was appointed to the bench in 2017.

Prior to taking the bench, Judge Illman served as a law clerk to Magistrate Judge Nandor J. Vadas in the Northern District of California from 2014 to 2017, and to Chief Magistrate Judge Wallace Capel, Jr. of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Alabama from 2007 to 2014. Prior to that, Judge Illman served as an Assistant Federal Public Defender in Montgomery, Alabama, from 2003 to 2007. In that role he represented indigent defendants charged with various crimes in federal trial and appellate courts, as well as representing Alabama's death row inmates in their federal habeas corpus litigation. Through his broad background as an attorney working for and practicing in the federal courts, Judge Illman has developed extensive experience in all manner of cases brought before the district court.

Judge Illman graduated with a degree in history from Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia, and from the University of Alabama School of Law in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

All new civil and criminal actions arising in the counties of Del Norte, Lake, Humboldt, and Mendocino are assigned directly to Judge Illman, subject to consent under 28 USC § 636(c)(1). Magistrate Judge Illman can hold case management conferences and hear many types of motions by video-conference if parties prefer to appear in San Francisco rather than travel to McKinleyville. In addition, parties can schedule dispositive motions to be heard on days when Judge Illman is in San Francisco.

This brochure is available on the Court's website **cand.uscourts.gov.**

Print copies are available at all of the Court's four courthouses.

The magistrate judge portraits in this brochure were taken by Roslyn Banish and Mike Oria (Judge Tse).

The courthouse photos were taken by court staff members.

Last Updated: December 2021

If you have additional questions about magistrate judge jurisdiction, please contact the Clerk's Office:

(415) 522-2000