Colleagues:

Judge Leo Valentine, Jr. officially retired from our Bench on February 18, 2019 at the age of 65. Upon his departure the Court issued a press release documenting his outstanding 24-year judicial career. The press release included a quote from me where I said:

> "Judge Leo Valentine was known for his excellent courtroom demeanor, always conducting himself in a dignified and respectful manner. We began working together in the District Attorney's Office, first as gang prosecutors, then as managers of the DA's Juvenile Division. Judge Valentine always cared deeply about helping disadvantaged youth, and supported programs that focused on rehabilitation. He brought that same caring spirit to his role as a judicial officer. Leo Valentine was much more than a judge, he was a role model for many and helped change lives for the better, during his long and distinguished judicial career. He will be missed."

Little did I know then, that those words would be offered five weeks later as a eulogy for our now deceased colleague. In the same press release Judge Valentine said that his retirement plans included: ". . . enjoy family, friends and life." Unfortunately, his life was cut short last Saturday, and Leo did not get to fully enjoy the retirement he had envisioned. What has been somewhat comforting, however, is the universal admiration and respect all of you had for Judge Valentine. In the many conversations I've had with our judicial officers since Leo's death, the descriptions are all the same: "consummate gentleman," "distinguished jurist" and "respected colleague." Also, he mentored and helped many new judges, and was always available to offer wisdom and advice.

Due to Judge Valentine's sudden and unexpected passing, no funeral arrangements have been made public at this time. The Court is, however, in touch with Judge Valentine's family, and will inform you about any public services when they are arranged.

PETER C. DEDDEH
Presiding Judge
San Diego Superior Court
San Diego Union Tribune Obituary