

## Met News

### **Judges: State Fails to Effect Needed Courthouse Repairs**

*Jurists in Van Nuys Allege Neglect on the Part of Judicial Council; Defender Counters That Money Can't Be Spent That Hasn't Been Allocated, Blames Legislature*

There are courthouses in Los Angeles County and elsewhere in the state in critical need of repair but, as some judges see it, the Judicial Council is dawdling in causing the fix-up work.

One judge in Van Nuys, who doesn't want to be identified, tells of asbestos problems, chambers being quarantined, and ceilings collapsing, commenting that the Judicial Council "is simply not keeping up its courthouses" and asserting that there is "an ongoing pattern that doesn't seem to be addressed." The judge insists: "It's not OK."

Another bench officer, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Gregory A. Dohi, who sits in the Van Nuys West Courthouse, relates:

"We have been told repeatedly that help is on the way."

But, he laments, it hasn't arrived.

He says with reference to the Judicial Council, and to Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, who heads it:

"Ultimately, the outfit she runs has some explaining to do. I would hope that she addresses it."

Cantil-Sakauye declines to comment.

However, a defender of the Judicial Council staff (formerly known as the Administrative Office of the Courts) provides an assurance that all is being done that can be done to keep courthouses in repair, given the inadequate funding of the Judicial Branch, and points to the shoddy state many of the buildings were in when the state assumed ownership of them in recent years. That defender is Los Angeles Superior Court Judge William F. Highberger, vice chair of the Judicial Council's Trial Court Facility Modification Advisory Committee. He told the MetNews yesterday that the Judicial Council staff recently approved two related heating, ventilation, and air conditioning ("HVAC") rehabilitation projects for Van Nuys East and West courthouses, and the authorizations were ratified May 17 by the Superior Court's Trial Court Facility Modification Advisory Committee.

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Full Article Here: <http://www.metnews.com/articles/2019/vannuys060619.htm>

## Met News

### Judge Margaret S. Henry to Retire From Los Angeles Superior Court



**MARGARET S. HENRY**  
*Los Angeles Superior Court  
Judge*

Margaret S. Henry will retire on June 29 after more than 18 years on the Los Angeles Superior Court bench.

She was appointed to her post in April 2001, by then-Gov. Gray Davis. Henry was then a 53-year-old Santa Monica attorney specializing in employment law.

“I am planning to write about the child welfare system, a biography of my mother, and anything else that comes to mind,” she told the MetNews.

The judge said she will also help care for her first grandson, Chace, who is 3½ months old.

“I may also sit as a temporary assigned judge,” she advised, adding:

“In my spare time I would like to study physics and learn Spanish, among other things.

“I do not understand people who think they would be bored if retired. If nothing else I will walk our pit-bull mix every day.”

#### **‘Dream Job’**

She recounted the “thrill” of her appointment to the bench “because this was my dream job” and told of having enjoyed her 10 years as supervising judge of the Juvenile Dependency Court, from 2005-12, having had “the ability to have some effect on child welfare policy.”

But, Henry continued, the past three years “presiding over the 18 & Up Court, which was created from my proposal, were the best,” elaborating:

“I got to talk to, or at least review reports for, and supervise the cases of thousands of youth. From the stories of these youth aging out of the child welfare system I learned much about what we do right and what we do wrong.”

She continued:

“Resilience of foster youth can be amazing, but they unquestionably do better with more support and positive reinforcement. That’s the biggest lesson

I've learned from the over 17½ years in the Juvenile Division of L.A. Superior Court.”

The jurist termed the Edelman Children's Courthouse “a jewel, with everyone connected by a shared mission” and said the “people there are what I will miss most.”

### **‘Judge of Year’**

In 2017, the Wilmont Sweeney Juvenile Court Judge of the Year Award was conferred on Henry by the Juvenile Court Judges of California, a section of the California Judges Association. Henry previously chaired that section.

The CJA said in a statement:

“As Supervising Judge she led a number of initiatives including those related to dental health, civil court access for injured youth in foster care, and access to government benefits. Judge Henry also arranged monthly training for judicial officers in juvenile dependency court relating to law and to legal procedures as well as for services available to children and families.”

Henry, who received her law degree from Ohio State University in 1972, was admitted in Ohio that year and served as an assistant attorney general there. She became licensed to practice in California in 1974.

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Full Article Here: <http://www.metnews.com/articles/2019/henry060619.htm>

## **Met News**

### **Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Speer To End 21-Year Career on the Bench**

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Susan M. Speer's last day on the bench will be June 21, ending a 21-year judicial career.

Speer was appointed March 12, 1998, to the Los Angeles Municipal Court by then-Gov. Pete Wilson. She had been a deputy district attorney since 1981.

The judge said yesterday that the “most compelling reason” for retiring is to spend more time with her four “adorable grandsons, ages 2, 3, 4 and 5, who live too darn far away.”

### **Plans to Travel**

She added:

“I also hope to travel more. We have visited over 40 countries and hope to continue to add to our bucket list of places to explore. While home, I will do

volunteer work with animals and the elderly, hoping to use my degree in nursing in some capacity.

“I plan to continue studying Spanish, attend culinary school, read, entertain, golf and exercise more. Sleeping in sounds wonderful too!”

The judge reflected:

“My fondest memories on the bench are having the opportunity to help victims, families of victims and those defendants willing to be helped. One really doesn’t know if they have made a positive difference in the lives of anyone because of decisions they made as a judge.

“I can only hope that there are souls whose lives were made a little bit better because of the decisions that I made.”