



ACAN 2026 Annual Meeting

“Justice Reimagined: Neutrals as Catalysts for Court Innovation”

International House at UC Berkeley
2299 Piedmont Ave, Berkeley, CA 94720

Wednesday, March 11

2:30pm - 5:00pm **Registration Open**

3:30pm - 3:45pm **President’s Welcome**

- Deborah Greenspan, ACAN President

3:45pm - 5:30pm **De-Escalation, Protest, and the Messages We Send**

- Douglas Noll, Author of *De-Escalate: How to Calm an Angry Person in 90 Seconds or Less*
- Lyndsey Olson, Former City Attorney, St. Paul, MN

Doug Noll will be sharing the science, techniques, and practical results of his approach to de-escalating high-tension situations. He has taught and demonstrated the effectiveness of his approach even among inmates in California prisons.

Lyndsey Olson, a former JAG officer who served in Iraq, will share how her advice remarkably de-escalated protests in St. Paul after George Floyd’s killing, despite the violence and destruction in Minneapolis, the Twin Cities across the river.

5:30pm - 5:45pm **Sponsor Spotlight: Western Alliance Bank**

“What Do I Do?” featuring Noah Hanft, AcumenADR

6:00pm - 7:00pm **Welcome Reception**

Start the ACAN 2026 Annual Meeting with an evening of networking and conversation in a relaxed, welcoming setting. Enjoy live music from fellow attendees performing as The Dissenters as we begin our time in Berkeley.

7:30pm **Dine Arounds - Dutch Treat**

Continue the kick-off fun for the ACAN meeting with optional Dine-Arounds at local Berkeley restaurants.

Thursday, March 12

7:30am - 5:00pm **Registration Open**

7:30am - 8:30am **Continental Breakfast**

8:30am - 10:30am **Effective Communication Across Differences**

- Hon. Jeremy Fogel (Ret.), Executive Director, Berkeley Judicial Institute
- Claudia Bernard, Retired Chief Circuit Mediator for the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals

- Howard Herman, JAMS, former ABA Chair, Dispute Resolution Section, former Director of ADR Programs for Northern District of California

In this hands-on, two-hour workshop, participants will learn about and experience a style of communication that promotes mutual understanding and respect for the humanity of others. Participants will practice listening and inquiry skills rooted in curiosity and empathy, designed to help them cut through the negative emotions often associated with litigation that can hamper their productivity and effectiveness.

10:30am - 10:45am

Sponsor Spotlight: JND Legal Administration

“What Do I Do?” featuring Tara Emory, Aligned Discovery

10:45am - 11:00am

Break

11:00am - 12:00pm

The Art and Science of Neutral Selection: Judicial and Attorney Perspectives

- Hon. Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers, United States District Judge for the Northern District of California
- Hon. James Donato, United States District Judge, Northern District of California
- Elizabeth Cabraser, Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein, LLP
- Molly Lane, Morgan Lewis & Bockius
- Moderated by Jill M. Manning, JAMS

How do courts and attorneys decide which court-appointed neutrals to select, and when is appointment the right strategic choice? This session explores judicial and practitioner perspectives on the criteria, analysis, and decision-making processes behind CAN appointments, including what courts and attorneys value most when selecting a neutral. Panelists will also discuss strategic considerations around when appointing a neutral can best support effective outcomes and the administration of justice.

12:00pm - 1:30pm

Lunch On Your Own

Suggestions Nearby:

- The Edmonds’ Cafe, located in the International House
- Caffe Strada, 2300 College Ave
- Binge Coffee House, 2528A Durant Street
- Food Trucks, down Bancroft Avenue from the law school toward Shattuck Avenue

12:15pm - 1:15pm

ACAN Board of Directors Meeting

This meeting is for ACAN Board members only.

1:30pm - 2:30pm

Practical Nuts and Bolts for Court-Appointed Neutrals

- Hon. Stephen Freccero, Presiding Judge, Marin County Superior Court, California
- Jill Kopiekin, USDC, ND Cal, ADR Program Director

- Janice Sperow, Sperow ADR Services
- David Tenner, Ridley, McGreevy, Winocur
- Moderated by Dana Welch, Welch ADR

This session offers a window into the day-to-day realities of serving as a court-appointed neutral. Panelists will share practical strategies, tools, and best practices for managing appointments, communicating effectively with courts and parties, and navigating common challenges.

2:30pm - 2:45pm

Sponsor Spotlight: Epiq

“What Do I Do?” featuring Patrick Hron, Benchmark Settlement Administration and Mediation Services

2:45pm - 3:00pm

Break

3:00pm - 4:00pm

Challenges Requiring Appointment of Neutrals: Mass Tort Bankruptcy - Current Developments

- Hon. Michael B. Kaplan, United States Bankruptcy Judge for the District of New Jersey
- Kenneth R. Feinberg, The Law Offices of Kenneth R Feinberg PC
- David Molton, Brown Rudnick LLP
- Al Togut, Togut, Segal & Segal LLP
- Moderated by Deborah Greenspan, ACAN President

Mass Tort bankruptcies present significant challenges to judges and litigants alike. The panel will address the case law developments, the challenging issues, anticipated trends, and the ways in which courts and litigants have used neutrals.

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Court-Appointed Neutrals in Criminal Proceedings

- Hon. Kimberley Baker Guillemet, Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court, former head of Los Angeles Mayor’s Office of Reentry, and former District Attorney
- Hon. Sergio C. Tapia II, Presiding Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court, former Supervising Judge of Criminal Division, and former Public Defender
- Moderated by Anna Niemann, Niemann Mediation Services

This session explores the growing role of court-appointed neutrals in criminal cases. Panelists will discuss how neutrals can support courts, parties, and counsel in managing complex matters while ensuring fairness and efficiency.

6:00pm - 9:00pm

ACAN Annual Reception & Keynote Dinner

Offsite Location:
Berkeley City Club
2315 Durant Ave, Berkeley, CA 94704

The Importance of Judicial Independence - Current Challenges and the Need for Courageous Lawyering

- Hon. Paul L. Friedman, United States District Court for the District of Columbia

Join colleagues for an evening of networking, recognition, and inspiration at ACAN's Annual Reception & Dinner. The program features a keynote presentation, awards ceremony, welcoming of new Fellows and Members, and recognition of the 2025 Incubator Program cohort.

9:00pm

After-Hours Networking

Unwind and connect with fellow attendees at Henry's Bar at the Graduate Hotel.

Friday, March 13

7:30am - 4:30pm

Registration Open

7:30am - 8:30am

Continental Breakfast

8:30am - 9:30am

Challenges Requiring Appointment of Court-Appointed Neutrals: Wildfires

- Hon. Ken Freeman (Ret.), JAMS
- Doug Dixon, Partner at Hueston Hennigan LLP
- Rahul Ravipudi, Panish Shea & Boyle LLP
- Moderated by Hon. Gail Andler (Ret.), JAMS
- Panel Chair: Douglas R. Young, JAMS

This session examines emerging challenges in appointing and effectively deploying court-appointed neutrals, with a focus on wildfire-related cases.

9:30am - 9:45am

"What Do I Do?" featuring Angela Reddock-Wright, Signature Resolution and Tia Simmons, Webb Law Centre, PLLC

9:45am - 10:00am

Break

10:00am - 11:00am

Challenges - Justice in Settlements: Potential Pitfalls and How Neutrals Can Help

- Dr. Julie Kaplow, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute
- Emily Kent, PwC
- Dr. H. Luke Shaefer, University of Michigan, City of Detroit Chief of Health, Human Services, and Poverty Solutions
- Miriam Wolock, Law Office of Miriam Z. Wolock, PLLC
- Moderated by Deborah Greenspan, ACAN President

This session explores the role of court-appointed neutrals in ensuring fair and effective settlements involving minors. Panelists will discuss best practices, ethical considerations, and strategies for protecting the interests of children while supporting the court and parties.

11:00am - 12:00pm

Three Edgy Issues in CAN Ethics: ABA Formal Opinion 518; AI; and Promising Practices in Claims Administration (an overview)

- Scharn Robinson, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
- Roma Petkauskas, BrownGreer

- Moderated by Edgar C. Gentle, III, ACAN Past President & Treasurer

This session explores three emerging and challenging areas in court-appointed neutral ethics: the implications of ABA Formal Opinion 518, the impact of artificial intelligence on neutral practice, and promising new practices in claims administration.

12:00pm - 1:30pm

Networking & Keynote Lunch

How Court Appointed Neutrals Can Help Promote Public Trust and Confidence in the Courts

- Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean of UC Berkeley School of Law

1:30pm - 2:30pm

A Conversation with Hon. Robin L. Rosenberg, Director of the Federal Judicial Center

- Facilitated by Hon. Jeremy Fogel (Ret.), Berkeley Judicial Institute

A live interview between a former Director of the Federal Judicial Center and the current Director to talk about court-appointed neutrals in the federal judicial system.

2:30pm - 2:45pm

“What Do I Do?” featuring Hon. Philippe Solages Jr., New York State Courts and Chrystal Fischer, Parenting with Grace, Inc.

2:45pm - 3:00pm

Break

3:00pm - 4:30pm

Court-Appointed Neutrals in Action - Access to Justice

- Hon. Paul L. Friedman, United States District Court for the District of Columbia
- Hon. Judith Levy, United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
- Hon. Sergio C. Tapia II, Presiding Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court, former Supervising Judge of Criminal Division, and former Public Defender
- Eric Helland, Rand Corp.
- Randi Ilyse Roth, ACAN Immediate Past President
- Moderated by Deborah Greenspan, ACAN President

This panel will explore ongoing challenges arising from the increasing number of largely unrepresented claimants, as well as increasingly complex cases involving tens of thousands of claimants asserting claims of abuse, toxic exposure, environmental harms, and civil rights violations.

4:30pm - 5:00pm

A Conversation with Chief Justice Collins Seitz, Jr. (Pre-Recorded)

- Facilitated by Bill Johnston, ACAN Board Member

A candid interview with the President of the Conference of Chief Justices on his work as a court-appointed neutral, how court-appointed neutrals can serve courts; and how courts can make more effective use of court-appointed neutrals.

5:00pm - 5:15pm

ACAN Annual Business Meeting: Announcement of 2026-2027 Officers and Board of Directors

5:15pm

Adjourn

6:30pm

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