

Judge Alicemarie Stotler *(1942-2014)*

Judge Alicemarie Huber Stotler was born in Alhambra, California, in 1942, the daughter of James and Loretta Huber. She grew up in Southern California, attending Alhambra High School, where she was on the cheerleading squad. When she began to think of careers, she turned for advice to an uncle on the Los Angeles Police Department, thinking that law enforcement would be interesting. In the mid-twentieth century, women in law enforcement were few and far between. Already at a young age, she was demonstrating a bold, pioneering spirit that would stay with her throughout her life. The uncle told her that she should instead learn the judicial system by going to law school.

Alicemarie entered the University of Southern California and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1964. Upon graduation, she took her uncle's advice and enrolled at the U.S.C. School of Law as one of eight women in her class. Her uncle had told her police work was "rough and nasty," but she found law school "rough and nasty" too, explaining to an interviewer that many classes were unpleasant and studying consumed an abnormal amount of time. Law school, however, gave her one of her early role models. Under Dean Evans, the law school brought women lawyers and judges to campus, one of whom was the Honorable Shirley Hufstedler. When Alicemarie competed in the state moot court with her partner Ray Fortner, the then-Justice Hufstedler was on the judging panel in the finals, which they won.

After graduating from law school in 1967, Alicemarie became the first woman to hold a full-time position as an Orange County deputy district attorney. In those days, she recalled, the D.A.s took almost everything to jury trial, including traffic tickets, and it was a great experience learning from the other deputies. The young attorney enjoyed sharing stories with her colleagues at a coffee shop near the Santa Ana courthouse.

In 1971, she made what she called "the best decision I ever made" and accepted lawyer James Allen Stotler's marriage proposal. She left the district attorney's office two years later, and she and her husband went

into private practice together in Tustin as Stotler & Stotler. Drawing on her previous experience, she did criminal defense work and specialized in law and motion and appellate work. Eventually, she argued before the California Court of Appeal and twice before the state Supreme Court.

In 1976, Mrs. Stotler became Judge Stotler with her appointment to the Harbor Judicial District Municipal Court by Governor Brown. After about a year on the Newport Beach municipal bench, she served as a justice pro tempore in the Fourth District Court of Appeal, Division Two, in San Bernardino, which to her was "the ultimate experience." In 1978, Governor Brown elevated her to the Orange County Superior Court. After five years on the superior court bench, she returned briefly to private practice in Newport Beach. Then in 1984, President Reagan nominated her to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California to a seat vacated by Judge Kelleher who had taken senior status. That year, she was honored by the Orange County Bar Association with the Franklin G. West Award, for lifetime achievement in advancing justice and the law. Once more, Judge Stotler displayed her pioneer spirit, becoming the first woman to serve on the federal bench in Orange County.

In 2005, she became Chief Judge of the Central District, serving until 2009. She also served on numerous Ninth Circuit committees and on the U.S. Judicial Conference. For five years, she chaired the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure, whose work impacted every federal court across the nation.

By this time, she herself had become a role model for women and men alike in the law, and the Orange County Federal Bar Association acknowledged that by establishing the Alicemarie H. Stotler Award for outstanding service.

Judge Stotler's colleagues remember her as a jurist of the highest standing, with a great legal mind, who was kind, thoughtful, and an inspiration to all she encountered. She is survived by her husband Superior Court Judge James Stotler.