

Justice Linda Marino Gemello

THE TEACHER, THE LAWYER, THE JURIST

BY LETICIA TOLEDO, ESQ. AND
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Linda Gemello began her career as Linda Marino Gemello, the teacher. Fortunately for the Bar, she changed her focus and returned to Santa Clara where she had earned her B.A. and M.A. in English, and graduated from its law school in 1979, becoming Linda Marino Gemello, the lawyer. She joined the [then named] law firm of Corey and Orton and became the firm's first female name partner; the name changed to Corey, Orton, Luzaich and Gemello.

Gemello recognizes her good fortune in learning the practice of law from George Corey who encouraged civic engagement and believed that "professionalism must include community service." Living that creed, Gemello served as President of the North County Bar, the San Mateo County Trial Lawyers, and in 1992 became the fourth woman to be elected president of the San Mateo County Bar Association.

MEETING THE NEEDS

Gemello sees the Bar as an organization striving to meet the needs of its members and the community. The Private Defender Program is a case in point. "It is difficult to balance the constitutional requirements of providing legal representation with the budget constraints and the tensions involved in the unpopular cause of criminal defense," she said. Gemello believes the Private Defender Panel is comprised of top-notch attorneys who offer the best representation possible, and that maintaining the program is important because "insuring the defense of the unpopular should give peace of mind to all citizens that their own constitutional rights are assured."



Linda Marino Gemello being sworn in to the San Mateo County Bench by Judge Susan Illston.

Gemello cites the Legal Aid Society as another instance of the Bar supporting accomplished and dedicated staff lawyers and volunteers who serve low-income people in the county.

In 1993, Gemello received the San Mateo County Bar Association Women Lawyers Section's Elinor Falvey Award, annually presented to a person or organization that advances the interest of women.

THROUGHOUT CAREER

Throughout her career, Gemello enjoyed being an active participant in the Bar's Mock Trial Program and teaching at the Stanford Trial Advocacy Program. She served on the State Bar Judicial Nominees Evaluation Commission and on Senator Barbara Boxer's Federal

Judicial Evaluations Committee.

In 1996 Gemello was elected to the San Mateo County Superior Court, where her assignments included civil and criminal trials, law and motion, and complex litigation. Her talents as a jurist were quickly recognized. The San Mateo County Trial Lawyers honored her with its Judge of the Year Award in 2000.

In 2002, Gemello was elevated to the First District Court of Appeal, Division Five, and served there until her retirement in 2008.

While it has been years since she left the Corey law firm, she continues to be an important member of its family, serving as a mentor to each of the women lawyers who rise through its ranks. □