

Duane E. Bennett, Attorney At Law

Duane E. Bennett is the former Oceanside City Attorney and General Counsel for the Port of San Diego. He was the first African American appointed as City Attorney in the County of San Diego. He also served as an Assistant City Attorney, Police Legal Advisor and Deputy District Attorney, with broad based experience in governmental law, employment, contracts, land use, insurance, civil rights and civil litigation.

Since retiring as General Counsel from the Port of San Diego in 2012, he has expanded his private law practice and is an experienced arbitrator, mediator and litigator handling employment and commercial disputes involving governmental agencies, financial institutions, shippers, retailers, resorts and hotels. He has served as a mediator for the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, Orange County Superior Court and as Judge Pro Tem for the San Diego Superior Court.

He currently arbitrates and mediates for the American Arbitration Association, County of Riverside and Riverside County Sheriffs' Association. He serves on the arbitration panel for the San Bernardino Civil Service Commission. He also serves as a hearing officer for employee retirement associations in Kern County, Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Bernardino County and San Diego County.

For many years, Bennett has been actively involved in litigation related to civil rights, due process and equal protection. He has served as an attorney and consultant in civil rights actions involving law enforcement agencies throughout the nation. He has litigated several civil rights actions alleging violations of the First, Fourth, Fifth, Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments.

He has advised and represented several law enforcement agencies, and served as an instructor/consultant for numerous law enforcement and public safety agencies including police departments for the cities of Banning, Cathedral City, Coachella, Oceanside, Palm Springs, Rock Island, Santa Ana and San Diego Harbor Police. He has served as legal advisor for fire departments in the cities of Oceanside, Santa Ana and Vista.

He has taught at police and fire academies in Orange County, Riverside County and San Diego County. He has also taught law enforcement courses in the states of Arizona, Illinois, Iowa and Indiana. He currently serves as a Legal Instructor for the University of California at San Diego; and formerly served as an Adjunct Professor for California Western School of Law. He has served on teaching faculties of the National College of District Attorneys and National Association of Attorneys General.

Bennett conducts workplace and internal affairs investigations as a part of his legal practice. Since 1998, he has conducted workplace investigations in the counties of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Diego. He has expertise in disciplinary actions, collective bargaining, "POBOR," "FBOR," FEHA, Title VII, ADA, FMLA and FLSA.