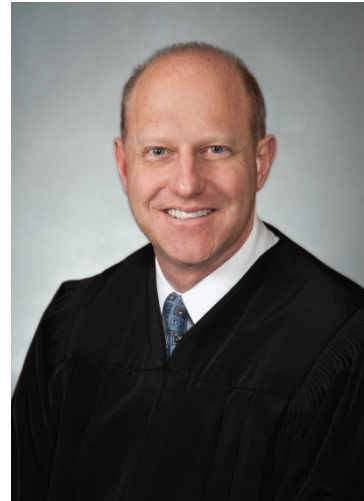




SRJC Alumni & Friends

In His Words: Larry Brown

“SRJC helped me find my voice; more specifically, Alberta Hart in Speech 1A did. Though it has been 30 years, I can still remember that she wrote on an evaluation, "You have such a great speaking style!" She gave me greater confidence and laid the groundwork for a lot of speech-making in the decades that followed, as a UC Davis law student, Ventura County Deputy District Attorney, Executive Director of the CA District Attorneys Association, First Assistant United States Attorney and, since my appointment in January 2010, Sacramento Superior Court Judge.



I speak at many high school student assemblies in Sacramento and almost without fail, extol the virtues of community college education for those who may not have the finances to go to a four-year university or who may not otherwise be ready to move away from home. I assure them I lost no ground when I transferred to UC Davis as a junior and stayed for law school.

SRJC will always hold a special place for me.”

More about Larry

As one of five siblings, Larry moved to Santa Rosa at age 7 and graduated from Cardinal Newman High School. Although he was accepted into UC Davis as a freshman, Larry chose to stay in Santa Rosa and attend SRJC due to the financial costs of college.

His time at SRJC proved valuable. “Alberta was so influential in my development. Her praise of my nascent speaking skills was a shot in the arm. I hadn’t really thought I had any particular talent in public speaking and she made feel like I could accomplish it all.”

While at SRJC, Larry continued to consider a law career. “Jack Shea, a 1950 SRJC alumnus, was the first attorney I had really known. I was so impressed by him and he helped plant the seed to become a lawyer. As I started taking classes at SRJC, they reinforced that law might be a good career choice for me.”

After transferring to UC Davis to pursue an undergraduate degree in political science, Larry completed his education at the UC Davis School of Law with a Juris Doctorate (J.D.) and joined the Ventura County District Attorney’s office. Only four days after passing the bar, Larry was

already trying his first case in Ventura. After almost five years in Ventura, Larry headed back to northern California when he was recruited for the California District Attorneys Association.

“I came up to the state legislature right at the beginning of the tough on crime frenzy in California. The three-strikes bill was pending and I was able to participate in a meeting with Governor Pete Wilson the day before he signed the bill.”

Later, Larry sought a way to get back into the trenches as a prosecutor and found a whole new challenge in learning the federal justice system when he transferred to the United States Attorney Office. In early 2009, he was appointed Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of California and worked on major indictments of political corruption, terrorism, mortgage fraud and more.

Today, as a Sacramento Superior Court Judge, Larry feels like he’s found his calling. “I transitioned easily from being an advocate to being neutral. I enjoy the responsibility of ensuring justice for all sides in a case.” Although he largely works on criminal cases, Larry also spends time in mental health court and has helped establish Sacramento’s first re-entry court. The program suspends the sentence of non-violent defendants but holds the time over their heads as leverage to ensure they complete a yearlong immersion in drug treatment programs, housing assistance, GED classes and other life skills designed to alter their criminal mind-set. When defendants appear before Larry each week, he uses the opportunity to praise and cajole – a completely different experience for many offenders appearing before a judge. With graduation from program, their sentences are commuted and ultimately lower their rates of recidivism.