

Michèle M. Bissada



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Practice Groups

Family Law, Divorce
Family Law, Litigation

Ms. Bissada is a Certified Specialist in Family Law and has spent her entire legal career practicing and further strengthening her roots in San Mateo County. Ms. Bissada is a prominent and seasoned litigator specializing in complex custody and financial matters. Ms. Bissada's extensive knowledge and talent allow her to smoothly manage complicated, high-asset issues that are unique to family law. She has been practicing for over sixteen years, enabling her to guide her client's clients with confidence and sensitivity throughout the often emotional process. She brings these honed skills to her mediation practice as well; both as a consulting attorney and as the mediator. Ms. Bissada is further trained in and practices collaborative law—a voluntary process providing an alternative for dispute resolution and settlement without going to Court.

Ms. Bissada is appointed by the Family Court Judges of Santa Clara County to regularly serve as a Judge Pro Tem; a position reserved for well-known, reliable, and highly-esteemed lawyers in the community. Similarly, Ms. Bissada is appointed by the Judges of San Mateo County as an Arbitrator in fee disputes between attorneys and their clients, a role requiring demonstrated sensitivity and fairness. Both appointments exhibit Ms. Bissada's on-going service to the community, as well as her reputation as a well-respected, objective and skilled leader. These positions further give Ms. Bissada the unique experience to "sit" in the Judges' shoes, a viewpoint essential to providing her clients with effective and efficient advice.

Professional Involvement

Ms. Bissada's extensive and dedicated involvement with the legal community is an invaluable resource to her clients, as it provides access to resources, relationships and a nuanced knowledge of the local, legal landscape. Her involvement in the legal community includes membership to the State Bar of California, as well as the San Mateo County, Santa Clara County, Palo Alto Area Bar Associations and the American Bar Associations. Ms. Bissada is currently a Board Member of the San Mateo County Bar Association (which has approximately 1,400 members), as well as 2011 President of the San Mateo County Bar Association.

Ms. Bissada has been a member and chair in a number of committees in the Bar Association, including: the Bench and Bar Committee, where she acted as a liaison between the County Judges and the lawyer members of the Bar to strengthen relationships with the judiciary and improve the legal practice in the County; the Finance Committee; the Membership Committee, where she works to improve the benefits, services and professional training programs for members; as well as the Community Affairs Committee, where she works to involve the public in Speaker events and inform service clubs, businesses, professional groups and schools in subjects relating to the law and administration of justice. Ms. Bissada has also worked diligently to strengthen the relationship between the San Mateo County Bar Association and the Legal Aid Society (of San Mateo County), ensuring that vital legal assistance and advocacy is available to numerous disadvantaged people in the community.

Since 2000, Ms. Bissada has served as a Delegate to the Conference of Delegates of California Bar Associations. She is the current Treasurer, as well as a past Chair, of the delegates representing San Mateo County on a statewide level where they critique, create and refine new and proposed legislation. Ms. Bissada has been a member of Collaborative Practice San Mateo County since 2001, where she also serves on their Membership Committee. Staying actively involved in the Collaborative Practice enables Ms. Bissada to facilitate cooperation and mutual agreement between her clients and opposing parties. She also served on the Board of Managers for the Peninsula Family YMCA from 1999 through 2007. In addition, Ms. Bissada was a member of the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program – Class of 2002, where she further honed her leadership skills to effectively serve her practice and her community.

Community Involvement

After graduating from California Western School of Law in 1994, Ms. Bissada made a purposeful decision to move back to the Bay Area to start her family and career. This decision was motivated by a desire to make a contribution to the legal field in the community where she

was raised. The driving force behind Ms. Bissada's commitment to helping underrepresented members of her community comes from her parent's immigration to the Bay Area.

Awards

Ms. Bissada received the 2010 Dorothy M. Wolfe Award in recognition of her extraordinary devotion and pro bono work with the Legal Aid Society; for aiding those who would not otherwise have access to vital legal services. Ms. Bissada brings the same tenacity to her pro bono work as she does her practice. Ms. Bissada has worked as an exemplary volunteer for the Domestic Violence Collaborative Pro Bono Project, through which she represents low-income victims of domestic violence, aiding them in their filings and making court appearances on their behalf.

Ms. Bissada's continues her work with the Legal Aid Society and San Mateo County by mentoring and inspiring other attorneys to take pro bono cases through the project. She has further trained and encouraged her associate attorneys at Flicker, Kerin, Kruger & Bissada to take on pro bono cases on a regular basis. Ms. Bissada is also currently serving on the Legal Aid Society Annual Lunch Committee, whose members diligently help to raise money to provide the vital legal services.

In her spare time, Ms. Bissada's interests include spending time with her family, strategic board games, traveling, movies and international cultures.

Education

JD, California Western School of Law, San Diego, 1994 BA, University of California, Davis, International Relations and French, 1989