

JUDGE SUZANNE N. KINGSBURY

Judge Suzanne Kingsbury was elected the Presiding Judge of the El Dorado County Superior Court in 1999, an assignment that will continue until at least December of 2008. She sits in Department Three of the court, which is located in South Lake Tahoe, where she presides over civil, criminal, juvenile, family, appellate and probate matters. She is the first woman to serve in the position of Superior Court judge in the county's history, as well as being its first female presiding judge.

Judge Kingsbury has been instrumental in the creation and expansion of many innovative programs in El Dorado County. Through her efforts, a variety of services have been made available to provide self represented litigants with the information needed to successfully navigate the court system. She was part of the team that obtained approval for the funding and construction of the El Dorado County Juvenile Hall in South Lake Tahoe. She expanded the civil alternative dispute resolution program to include full services in South Lake Tahoe, providing litigants with a no cost means to resolve court cases without going to trial. Judge Kingsbury also initiated a family law dispute resolution program, which allows families going through a marital dissolution the ability to settle cases amicably and less expensively. Through collaboration with other justice system partners, Judge Kingsbury also brought El Dorado County its first juvenile and adult drug courts, mental health court and dependency mediation and drug courts.

In June of 2004, Chief Justice Ronald M. George appointed Judge Kingsbury to a three year term on the Judicial Council, the policy making body of California's state court system. She is the first judge from El Dorado County to serve in that capacity. Since 2005, she has served as the chair of the Council's internal Rules and Projects Committee (RUPRO), and has been actively involved in the council's efforts to bring plain language jury instructions and forms to California trial courts. She also helped oversee the reorganization of California Rules of Court.

Since assuming the bench, Judge Kingsbury has served as a member of CJER's Continuing Judicial Studies, Rural Courts and Presiding Judge and Court Executive Education Committees and the Continuing Judicial Studies, Cow Counties and California Judicial Administration Conference Planning Committees. Since 1999, she has served on the Trial Court Presiding Judges' Advisory Committee. She was previously appointed by the Chief Justice to serve as a member of the Task Force on Self Represented Litigants, the Task Force on Judicial Ethics Issues, and the Criminal Law Advisory Committee. She also has been a member of several Judicial Council Working Groups relating to judicial administration issues. Judge Kingsbury is also actively involved in judicial education, serving as a frequent faculty member and facilitator, particularly in the area of judicial administration and collaborative courts.

Judge Kingsbury graduated in 1981 from California State University in Sacramento after receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice. She received her Juris Doctorate degree from McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento in 1982. While working her way through school, she served as an intern with the California Department of Corrections, the California District Attorney's Association, and the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of California and the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office. After being admitted to the bar in 1982, she worked in private civil practice in Sacramento County for approximately three years before moving to El Dorado County in 1985 to accept a position with the El Dorado County District Attorney's office.

Judge Kingsbury served as a deputy district attorney for over five years. During her tenure with the office, she helped found the South Lake/El Dorado County Narcotics Task Force (SLEDNET) and began a vertical prosecution program for sexual assault and child abuse cases. In 1990, she moved to the El Dorado County Public Defender's office, serving as a deputy public defender representing juvenile and adult offenders. It was at the urging of her supervisor at the Public Defender's office that she ran for judicial office.

Judge Kingsbury has been an adjunct instructor in the Criminal Justice program at Lake Tahoe Community College for over a decade. She has been active in community affairs, including serving as a member, officer and president of the Board of Directors for the South Lake Tahoe Women's Center and a member of the Board of Directors of the Sierra Recovery Center, Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation, and Hospice of the Lake.

Judge Kingsbury has been married for over twenty years to her husband Jim Ammons, a retired law enforcement officer.