



**SUPERIOR COURT**  
*of*  
**SANTA BARBARA**  
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**Contact:** Angela Braun  
**Telephone:** 805-614-6636  
**Email:** [abraun@sbcourts.org](mailto:abraun@sbcourts.org)  
**Website:** [www.santabarbara.courts.ca.gov](http://www.santabarbara.courts.ca.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**June 29, 2026**

**JUAN HIGUERA TO BE SWORN IN AS  
SANTA BARBARA SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE  
ON JULY 2, 2026**

Santa Barbara, California, June 29, 2026

Presiding Judge Patricia L. Kelly is honored to welcome Juan Higuera as the newest member of the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Barbara.

On Friday, June 26, 2026, Governor Gavin Newsom appointed Juan Higuera to serve as a Judge in the Santa Barbara County Superior Court. Prior to his appointment, Higuera served as a Deputy Public Defender with the Santa Barbara County Public Defender's Office since 2018. Previously, he was an Associate at Hathaway Firm from 2016 to 2018 and Hager & Dowling from 2015 to 2016. From 2013 to 2015, he served as a Deputy District Attorney with the Ventura County District Attorney's Office. Juan Higuera earned his Juris Doctor degree from Loyola Law School.

Upon learning of Juan Higuera's appointment, Presiding Judge Kelly noted, "As *Presiding Judge, I am pleased to welcome Juan Higuera to our court. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated fairness, integrity, and a strong commitment to the rule of law. He is ethical, hardworking, and responsible – qualities that are essential to serving both the court and the public with distinction. I am confident that he will be a valuable addition to our bench and that he will carry out his duties with the professionalism, impartiality, and dedication our community deserves.*"

Juan Higuera will be sworn into office on Thursday, July 2, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. in Department 7 of the Santa Maria Courthouse. Members of the public and the media are welcome to attend the swearing-in ceremony which will be in person and able to be viewed via Zoom.

Higuera fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge John McGregor.