

# Judge Mel I. Dickstein (ret'd)

1912 Girard Avenue South

[Info@meldicksteinadr.com](mailto:Info@meldicksteinadr.com)

Minneapolis MN. 55403

612 888-4681

I am a retired Minnesota trial court judge and former law firm partner with sophisticated legal ability and a facility to listen to and consider all viewpoints. I have a proven ability to work with others long term toward a goal, and to help parties reach resolution of disputes, either through mediation or arbitration.

## Key Accomplishments

### **Mediator, Arbitrator and Special Master 2018- present**

- Handled numerous mediations and arbitrations resolving stockholder disputes, real estate ventures, business contracts of every kind, employment matters, product liability cases and estate and probate disputes, among other subject matters.
- Served as arbitrator in both private arbitrations and as an approved arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association.
- Served as Special Master when appointed by judges of the Fourth Judicial District (Hennepin County, Minneapolis, Minnesota)..
- Taught *Introduction to Mediation* to LLM students in a two week seminar at the University of Debrecen Law School in Debrecen, Hungary.

### **State District Court Judge 2002 – 2018** Presided over civil, criminal and family court cases

- Decided important cases in diverse areas of the law periodically mediating cases that were trial ready.
- Member of the Minnesota Supreme Court General Rules Committee
- Member of the Minnesota District Judges' Association Civil Jury Instruction Guide Committee
- Worked to improve the justice system treatment of the poor including active work toward the amendment of the structured settlement law and a misdemeanor theft diversion program

- Wrote extensively for a broad audience regarding the role of the judiciary

### **Partner Robins Kaplan LLP 1978-2002**

- Engaged as lead counsel in a national practice representing both plaintiffs and defendants in commercial property matters, including insurance coverage disputes. Engaged in countless negotiations and mediations as client representative.
- Developed strong knowledge of substantive tort, contract and warranty law in numerous states
- Handled white collar criminal matters principally arising from alleged violations of the internal revenue laws
- In my most memorable case, I was a co-lead in a massive lawsuit arising from the catastrophic fire in a grade A office tower located in Center City Philadelphia. The building, filled with law firms, accounting firms, insurance companies and other similar businesses, was a total loss with resulting property damage and business interruption claims. The office building next door was also a loss. Several blocks of Center City Philadelphia were cordoned off for weeks with resulting class action, business interruption claims. Three firemen were tragically killed fighting the fire, with resulting wrongful death claims. Total claims were several hundred million dollars. The allegations asserted that the fire began in the offices of a major reinsurance company—our client.

### **Assistant United States Attorney, District of Minnesota 1974-1978**

- Federal prosecutor successfully handling over 45 federal jury trials
- Represented the United States in appeals to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals
- Received Award of Excellence from the Director of the FBI

## **Education**

### **University of Minnesota Law School, Juris Doctor, 1973**

### **University of Minnesota January –June 1970**

- Graduate studies and instructor in rhetoric and public address

### **University of Minnesota 1969**

- B.A. *summa cum laude*; Phi Beta Kappa
- Major: Political Science
- Minor: Rhetoric and Public Address
- President Hillel Foundation

## **Volunteer Activities and Board Memberships**

1. Before coming to the bench my volunteer activities focused on pro bono legal representation of individuals and organizations.
  - I provided long-term legal representation to Liberian and Indian immigrant families.
  - I also provided legal services to organizations including the Minnesota Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing, the Northern Clay Center and the Greater Minneapolis Childrens' Crisis Nursery.
  
2. I served, as well, in leadership capacities as vice-chair for Project Elan, an alternative to prison for women, a board member of the Lowry Hills Residents' Association, vice chair of the board of directors for the Northern Clay Center, and board member of the Greater Minneapolis Childrens' Crisis Nursery.
  
3. After taking the bench, my volunteer activities focused on judicial initiatives. I served on the Fourth Judicial District Executive Committee, the Bench and Bar Committee, and the Fourth Judicial District Pro Bono Committee.
  
4. I worked to initiate changes to the structured settlement law, and led an effort to form a misdemeanor theft diversion program.
  
5. I also served as an active member on the following state wide committees:
  - The Minnesota Supreme Court General Rules Committee
  - The Minnesota District Judges' Civil Jury Instruction Guide Committee.

## **Select Presentations**

- Instructor, Minnesota Institute for Legal Education, Insurance Claims and Management Institute
- Instructor, Seminar on Tax Fraud: The Criminal Investigation and Civil Tax Ramifications presented to the Minnesota Society of CPA's Annual Meeting
- Lecturer on Property Exclusions to the Boiler and Machinery Society of Boston and the Northwest Loss Association
- Instructor, Minnesota Defense Lawyers' Association Trial Skills Seminar
- Panel member on several trial practice seminars presented by the Hennepin County Bar Association

- Introduction to Mediation- A two week seminar at the Debrecen University Law School LLM program on International and European Union Commercial Law.

### Select Private Practice Publications

- "Unhappy Returns," Minnesota Business Journal, February 1986
- "Submitting False Information to the IRS," National CPA Journal, March 1986
- The Long Arm of the IRS, CityBusiness, 1986
- "Allocation of Coverage Among Triggered Policies" Minnesota Institute for Legal Education, 1995

### Select Judicial Publications

- "***A Judge's Story***, Part 1, Vol.33 Skyway News No. 17 April 28-May 4, 2003
- "***A Judge's Story*** " Part 2, Vol. 33, Skyway News No. 18, May 5-May 11, 2003
- "***What I Learned***" Law and Politics No. 147 August/September 2004
- "***Culture of Violence Keeps Claiming Victims***" Editorial Letter, StarTribune May 13, 2007
- "***Two Years on the Bench***," MPLS/STPAUL Magazine No. 168 February/March 2008
- "***Family Matters***"(published as Family Circus)MPLS/STPAUL Magazine No. 168, February/March 2008
- "***What Makes a Good Judge***," Minnesota Lawyer, Vol 13, No.44, November 2, 2009
- "***To List of Racial Disparities Add Convictions***," Editorial StarTribune, September,26, 2011
- A series of 14 articles in MinnPost.com, an online news and commentary publication. The articles, directed at a popular audience, include: "Why judges write opinions," How judges make decisions," What do judges think of lawyers?," When judges disagree with the law," The unseen good work of our courts," and "Is judicial demeanor important?"
- "***Reflections on the Cause of Justice- a retiring judge looks back on his time on the bench***," Bench & Bar, Official Publication of the Minnesota State Bar Association, Volume LXXV Number XI, December 2018.