



News Release

Superior Court of California, County of Kern

January 6, 2023

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TWO NEW SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES SWORN IN

The Kern County Superior Court is pleased to announce the election and swearing in of two new Judicial Officers. Judge Michael A. Caves and Judge T. Mark Smith were sworn in January 2, 2023.

Judge Caves previously served as a Deputy District Attorney for more than 15 years. He received his Juris Doctor from University of San Francisco School of Law in 2007. Judge Caves earned his Ph.D. from Clemson University and a Master of Laws (LL.M) from University of New Hampshire School of Law. Judge Caves also has a Master's in Public Administration and a Master's in Negotiation, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, in addition to his Bachelor of Arts degree from University of Maryland.

Judge Caves is presiding over cases in Lamont. He filled the seat of retired Judge Michael Dellostritto.

Judge Smith was born and raised in Bakersfield. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Claremont McKenna College and graduated with his Juris Doctor from University of California, Los Angeles School of Law. Judge Smith began his legal career in 1992 in Los Angeles at the national law firm of Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal. He began working in Bakersfield at Clifford & Brown, P.C. in 2000 where he was later a partner and shareholder. From 2019 to 2022 he was an equity partner at Zimmer & Melton, LLP.

Judge Smith is serving in a Metro Criminal courtroom. He filled the seat of retired Judge David Lampe.

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