



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTIES OF BUTTE, GLENN AND TEHAMA

SELF HELP ASSISTANCE & REFERRAL PROGRAM

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Column #1

ASK THE COURT

Welcome to the first installment of the bi-monthly “Ask the Court” column. This column is designed to provide the public with answers to their general questions regarding judicial proceedings and the court system. For many, the courts are a vast maze of unfamiliar language and practices. And for most, the only contact they have with the court is a traffic citation or a divorce. This is your opportunity to ask the experts in the courts about things that you have heard about but never knew the why or the meaning of. Due to the high volume of questions that we receive, we may not be able to respond to every question asked. However, we will publish those that will be of most interest to the readers. The only limitation to the questions in this column are that they must be court related and must not be about a specific case. This column is NOT about giving legal advice or settling legal disputes.

To begin this column, we will speak to what the role of the Judge is in our society.

Answer: When asked to think of a judge, you- like most people- may picture a person sitting in the front of the court in a black robe, or presiding over a marriage ceremony. But, the judge’s role is much more complex. Judges must use their expert knowledge, education, and experience to be sure that cases, verdicts, and final judgments are carried out according to what the law outlines and permits. While holding hearings and presiding over court, judges must be unbiased and carefully listen to all evidence and testimony presented, deciding what is admissible in each case. In criminal cases, the judge must inform defendants of their rights; if the criminal defendant is found guilty, the judge must determine the proper sentence or fine as set by limits established by federal and state laws. Judges write case decisions and do frequent legal research, which involves looking at and interpreting statutes, regulations, laws, and cases that involved similar issues. In a jury trial, the judge instructs the jury as to their role and as to what laws and rules apply to that specific case. The judge makes sure that the rights and liberties of all citizens are protected, which makes the role of the judge the most important figure in the justice system. – Glenn County Superior Court Administration

Do you have questions that you want the Court to answer? Please email them to askthecourt@glenncourt.ca.gov or mail them to Glenn County Superior Court, Attn: Ask the Court, 526 W. Sycamore Street, Willows, CA 95988. Questions may be submitted anonymously. Donald Cole Byrd is the current Presiding Judge of the court.