



## **Joann Rezzo, Esq. Mediator**

### **OVERVIEW:**

Joann Rezzo brings a balanced approach to the mediation process based on her background representing both Defendants and Plaintiffs at trial. Joann is an experienced trial lawyer who spent her legal career handling high-stakes employment cases (e.g., wrongful termination, retaliation, breach of contract, harassment, discrimination) as well as personal injury, insurance bad faith, professional negligence, and other tort cases.

During her 26+ year career as a trial attorney, Joann's client base covered the spectrum from blue-collar workers to executives in Fortune 500 companies, from small start-up companies to multi-national Fortune 500 corporations. Her clients have included the City of San Diego, Southwest Airlines, Qualcomm, Aventis Pharmaceuticals, the former Mayor of San Diego, the former President of San Diego State University, and high-level executives from many large corporations.

Within the employment law arena, Joann handled cases for companies, as well as high-level executives and commissioned salespeople. She won multi-million-dollar verdicts for blue-collar workers and successfully defended individuals and companies like Southwest Airlines, Aventis Pharmaceuticals, John Hancock Insurance, and Barr Laboratories.

Joann spent 8 years as an attorney at Gray, Cary, Ware & Freidenrich (now DLA Piper) before co-founding Edleson & Rezzo. While at Edleson & Rezzo, Joann developed a passion for mediation, serving as the firm's primary negotiator in all of the firm's settlement conferences and mediations. Her passion for mediation took root, and she decided to become a full-time mediator where she utilizes her extensive legal and trial experience to help parties resolve their disputes. Joann's calm and engaging style, coupled with her ability to relate to people from all walks of life, wins the trust of lawyers and clients alike. She's won acclaim for her can-do attitude and tenacious pursuit of an agreed-upon solution to litigation disputes.

### **RATES:**

- Full day: \$7,500
- Three-quarter day: \$6,000
- Half day: \$4,500
- Additional time billed at the hourly rate of \$750
- Non-refundable administrative fee: \$400 per party

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE:

- **Employment:** Wrongful termination, Harassment, Discrimination, Retaliation, Unpaid wages (commissions, severance, etc.), Breach of contract
- **Torts:** Personal injury (auto, dog bites, slip and fall, etc.), Fraud, Elder abuse, Civil rights, Defamation (libel, slander, compelled self-publication), Aircraft crashes
- **Business/Insurance:** Breach of contract; Bad faith; B&P Code 17200/17500 claims; Insurance coverage; Intentional and negligent interference
- **Professional Negligence/Probate:** Trustee liability, Breach of fiduciary duty, Professional malpractice (legal, medical, accounting), Elder abuse claims against professionals

## LEGAL CAREER & PRIOR EXPERIENCE:

After graduation from law school, Joann joined Gray, Cary Ware & Freidenrich (now DLA Piper, one of the largest firms in the world), where she developed a keen sense for handling a wide array of litigation matters. She honed her trial skills representing some of the largest companies in the United States including, Fortune 500 companies like Southwest Airlines, Aventis Pharmaceuticals, Barr Laboratories, and John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company. Joann was a founding partner of Edleson & Rezzo where she continued to represent defendants in civil cases and tried cases for "the little guy" as well, representing victims of civil rights discrimination and individuals in contingency-fee plaintiff's cases. Joann has tried approximately 25 cases to verdict. Joann serves as an Adjunct Professor of Law, teaching litigation and trial skills at the University of San Diego. Joann also served as judge *Pro Tem* for the San Diego Superior Court for a number of years.

## EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

Joann obtained her bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of San Diego in 1993, graduating summa cum laude. From 1993-96, she attended the USC School of Law, one of the highest-ranked law schools in the nation, graduating with a Juris Doctorate degree. During law school, Joann served as a summer Extern for The Honorable John S. Rhoades, United States District Judge for the Southern District of California. She is a member of the California State Bar and the San Diego and Los Angeles County Bar Associations.

## ADR EXPERIENCE & SPECIALTIES:

Joann's training includes:

- Pepperdine University, "Mediating the Litigated Case" (2012)
- Los Angeles County Bar Association, "Advanced Mediator Training" (2016)
- National Conflict Resolution Center's mediator credential program (2020)

Joann serves as a mediator with the San Diego Superior Court. Her experience includes wrongful termination, harassment, retaliation, failure to pay wages (including commissions / severance), ERISA, breach of contract, bad faith, insurance law (coverage and bad faith), personal injury, defamation, professional negligence, unfair business practices, fraud, and an array of other business and tort claims.

## ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS:

Repeatedly selected for Best Lawyers in America, San Diego Magazine's Top Lawyers, and Super Lawyers, Joann was rated "AV Preeminent" (the highest peer rating available) by Martindale-Hubbell in 2005 based on feedback from lawyers and judges personally familiar with her work. She has consistently held that rating every year since then. Joann was honored as a "Rising Star" litigator in California in 2014 (an honor bestowed on less than 2.5 percent of California lawyers) by Super Lawyers Magazine. Joann was awarded the Pro Bono Publico Distinguished Service Award in 2000 by the San Diego Volunteer Lawyers Program for her public service on behalf of indigent clients.

## TESTIMONIALS:

“Lovely to work with! Joann Rezzo had reviewed the briefs and knew the exhibits. Despite there being disagreement regarding the facts, she was able to get us to an agreement in under four hours. Joann was very patient and kind with the client and knowledgeable on trial-related issues (given she’s handled so many). Our client appreciated all of this. We would absolutely work with Joann again.”

- *Emily J. Fox, Partner*  
*Wilson Turner Kosmo LLP*

“Joann’s mediation style was informed and detail-oriented yet relaxed enough that my client felt comfortable talking directly to her. She did a great job of spotting and drilling down on key issues which was a big factor in why the case settled during the mediation.”

- *Defense counsel on Wrongful Termination of Employment case*

“Joann successfully mediated a Quiet Title and Partition action for my client. There was a lot of emotion involved in the case, given the parties’ past relationship, and Joann’s demeanor and approach greatly eased the situation. Joann was extremely prepared. Her management of the mediation required that both attorneys and their clients be prepared as well, which facilitated the mediation process.”

- *Kelly T., Plaintiff’s Attorney in Quiet Title Action*

“Joann did an outstanding job for us on a recent auto accident mediation. She was knowledgeable, fair and honest and kept after it following the expiration of our mediation time. The case settled a few days later based upon her reasoned Mediator’s Proposal. Thank you, Joann, for a job well done!”

- *San Diego Plaintiff’s counsel on a Personal Injury case*

## **HOBBIES & INTERESTS:**

In her free time, Joann enjoys spending time in Southern Baja, Maui and Mammoth Lakes, reading, traveling, snorkeling, boogie boarding, conducting genealogical research, and bicycling with her family. Joann has served for many years as a board member of Big Brothers & Sisters of San Diego and the Southern California Resource Center, and a member of the San Diego Historical Society.

## **RECENT PRESS:**

**National Law Review:** “Another Gargantuan California Verdict – This time for \$18.6 Million”

**San Diego Union-Tribune:** “Carlsbad’s Xenergy Is Awarded \$8 Million”

**NBC-7 San Diego Evening News:** “Employee Wins \$8M in Lawsuit Against Carrier Corporation” (highlighting \$9.5M verdict for blue-collar worker)

**San Diego Daily Transcript:** “Small Firm Nets Big Award for Client”

**The Daily Journal:** “Verdicts & Settlements” (featuring \$9.6M jury verdict for a client in employment/fraud case)

**Law Link:** “David vs. Goliath – Jury Awards Over \$9.5M to Punish Corporate Greed”

To schedule a mediation, please contact Veronica Montenegro at 619-238-2400 x259 or [vmontenegro@westcoastresolution.com](mailto:vmontenegro@westcoastresolution.com) or email Joann at [jrezzo@westcoastresolution.com](mailto:jrezzo@westcoastresolution.com).