



Ralph Hughes, Esq.
Mediator

OVERVIEW:

I have been working in the probate field in San Diego for more than 45 years. I am a Certified Specialist, a member of the Trusts and Estates Executive Committee (TEXCOM 2016-2022) and a fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC).

I am maintaining my practice, but I am extremely happy mediate with West Coast Resolution Group. I love to be involved in mediation, and I think that I have an ability to work with people, to hear their stories and concerns, and to assist them in resolving their conflicts. I tend to follow the traditional approach to mediation, which is to start with everyone in the same room, then go into breakout rooms. However, I can be flexible as required. I have participated in well over 100 probate mediations.

RATES:

- Mr. Hughes is only providing full day cases.
- \$475 per hour
- \$400 administrative fee per party

LEGAL CAREER & PRIOR EXPERIENCE:

Early in my career, I was assigned to work on the probate of a travel agent who was murdered by his fifth wife. Several previous wives filed claims, and a baby was presented as the child of the murderess, therefore a pretermitted heir. During several years of administration and litigation, we sold several pieces of real property, dealt with all of the claims, endured the audit of the 706, and sued a bank in Switzerland from which the murderess had stolen money. Ultimately, we proved that – not only had the decedent not fathered the alleged child – but the murderess was not even the child's mother!

From that point on, I believed that estate planning and probate litigation could be very interesting practice areas, and I have concentrated my practice in those areas for decades. I have drafted trusts. I have administered trusts and probates. I have completed estate tax returns and I have participated in audits. I have been involved in almost every sort of probate or trust dispute there is. I have reached the point at which some of my expertise is best used as a mediator.

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

I graduated from the University of Denver in 1973. I went straight to law school, and graduated from UC Berkeley Boalt Hall in 1976. After graduating, I came straight to San Diego. For a while, I thought that I would become a tax lawyer, and I completed about half of the course work for an LLM in Tax before I thought better of it. I have spoken at many continuing education programs. I taught a course called “Estate Planning Practicum” at Cal Western for about 20 years, and I taught probate paralegals at UCSD extension.

I have been active in the probate bar in San Diego. I was on the Legal Specialization Committee of the State Bar for several years, and I am now a member of the Trusts and Estates Executive Committee of the California Lawyers Association. The Executive Committee consists of lawyers from around the state who actively review and comment on legislation important in the fields of trust and probate law as it winds through the legislature. We also propose new laws, publish a Quarterly journal, and conduct continuing legal education.

ADR EXPERIENCE & SPECIALTIES:

I became involved in mediation early, and I took one of the first mediation courses offered in San Diego. For well over a decade, I have represented parties in mediations and I have conducted mediations – always in the field of probate and estate planning, or probate litigation.

TESTIMONIALS:

“Mr. Hughes was very knowledgeable about the specifics of our case, as well as the applicable law. He was amazingly effective in reaching a settlement through a mediator’s proposal. I would definitely work with this mediator again.”

- Steven Barnes, Artiano Shinoff, San Diego, CA

HOBBIES & INTERESTS:

My favorite hobby is skiing. Every year, I try to get in as many days of skiing as I can – a job that is not so easy for a person living in San Diego. I am learning German. I love to read. I have practiced yoga for many years. From time to time, I go to the sea for some sport fishing.

To schedule a mediation, please contact Veronica Montenegro at 619-238-2400 x259 or vmontenegro@westcoastresolution.com.