

BIOGRAPHY

Honorable Vaughn R. Walker

Former Chief Judge, Northern District of California, San Francisco, CA



Judge Vaughn R. Walker was a United States District Court Judge for the Northern District of California from February 1990 through February 2011. Judge Walker was nominated by President George H.W. Bush and earlier by President Reagan and confirmed by the United States Senate in November 1989. Judge Walker was the Chief Judge from September 2004 until December 31, 2010.

Judge Walker graduated from the University of Michigan in 1966. He worked briefly at the Securities & Exchange Commission and was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow in Economics at the University of California, Berkeley. He studied law at the University of Chicago and Stanford University, receiving a J.D. degree in 1970.

From 1971 to 1972, Judge Walker was a law clerk to the Honorable Robert J. Kelleher of the United States District Court in Los Angeles. From 1972 to 1990, he practiced law with Pillsbury Madison & Sutro (now Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman) in San Francisco, becoming a partner in 1978.

In 2000, Judge Walker was assigned by the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation to handle a series of cases arising out of claims by former prisoners of war. Resolution of the claims required interpretation of provisions in the 1951 Treaty of Peace entered into by the United States, Japan, and other nations. *In re World War II Era Japanese Forced Labor Litigation*, 164 F. Supp. 2d 1160 (N.D. Cal. 2001), *aff'd sub nom by Deutsch v. Turner Corp.*, 317 F.3d 1005 (9th Cir. 2003), *reh denied*, 324 F.3d 692, *certiorari denied* 540 U.S. 820 (2003).

In 2007, Judge Walker was assigned by the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation to handle *In re National Security Agency Telecommunications Records Litigation*, MDL No. 06-1791, a series of cases challenging telecommunications carriers' alleged cooperation with the Terrorist Surveillance Program of the Bush administration. Judge Walker denied motions by the government and telecommunications carriers to dismiss the litigation on the ground that it would reveal state secrets. *Hepting v. AT&T*, 439 F. Supp. 2d 974 (N.D. Cal. 2006).

In 2010, Judge Walker presided over the seminal case *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, 704 F. Supp. 2d 921 (N.D. Cal. 2010). The action challenged California ballot initiative Proposition 8, which amended the state constitution to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman and precluded the state from recognizing marriages between same-sex couples. Judge Walker found that Proposition 8 failed to advance any rational basis in singling out gay men and lesbians for denial of a marriage license, did nothing more than enshrine in the state constitution the notion that opposite-sex couples are superior to same-sex couples, and prevented California from fulfilling its constitutional obligation to provide marriages on an equal basis. Judge

Walker found Proposition 8 invalid and ruled it unconstitutional. In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Proposition 8 proponents did not have standing to appeal the district court ruling, and thus Judge Walker's opinion was left intact.

In 21 years on the federal bench, Judge Walker handled about 8,000 cases, more than 250 trials, numerous settlement conferences, and sat by designation on the United States Courts of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and the Federal Circuit. In April 2011, Judge Walker returned to private practice focusing on arbitration and mediation services. Judge Walker currently teaches a complex litigation course at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law.

Judge Walker served as a member of the Civil Rules Advisory Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States, is the former chair of the St. Francis Foundation, and a member of the American Law Institute and other professional organizations. He is a former member of the California Law Revision Commission, president of the Lawyers' Club of San Francisco and judicial representative of the American Bar Association Section of Antitrust Law.

Source: *Judge Vaughn R. Walker*, FEDERAL ARBITRATION, INC.,
<http://www.fedarb.com/Walker.asp>
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