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Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

THE HONORABLE MICHELLE T. FRIEDLAND

On behalf of the Ninth Circuit, I would like to thank the members of *Golden Gate University Law Review* for all the work that they put into publishing the *Ninth Circuit Survey* each year. As the only Law Review in the country that publishes a journal dedicated to reviewing Ninth Circuit decisions, the members of *Golden Gate University Law Review* provide a valuable service to the legal community.

The Ninth Circuit is comprised of the Court of Appeals, 15 judicial districts, bankruptcy courts, and pretrial/probation offices. Serving a diverse and large geographical span of the western United States and Pacific islands, the Circuit continues to be one of the busiest in the country. The Circuit accounted for 22% of all new appeals filed nationwide in 2017. Despite the more than 11,000 new cases opened last year, our circuit judges and court staff remain steadfast in our commitment to administer justice by engaging with complex legal issues and deciding cases efficiently and fairly.

The dynamic and evolving body of precedent, especially in a Circuit that handles such a wide ranging and voluminous docket, calls for an annual survey. Last year alone, the Circuit's panels produced 500 published opinions and 6,956 unpublished dispositions. These decisions addressed thousands of habeas cases and administrative agency appeals, and nearly one thousand criminal appeals. Observing and reflecting on these varied cases and their outcomes helps illuminate the trail our judiciary is forging and what potentially lies ahead.

The Ninth Circuit puts much thought and attention not only into processing cases dutifully, but also into further improving and streamlining our procedures. For example, the Circuit continues to introduce measures to help expedite cases, which last year resulted in a drop in the total number of pending cases and a decrease in the average time from when a notice of appeal is filed to when a final decision is issued.

The Ninth Circuit undoubtedly will face new challenges and changes in the future. I am certain that the Circuit will rise to the occasion and continue its tireless work to ensure equal justice for every litigant who comes before it.

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