

**Hannah G. Solomon Award**  
**The Hon. LaDoris Hazzard Cordell**  
**Superior Court Judge (Ret.)**



LaDoris Hazzard Cordell, a 1974 graduate of Stanford Law School, was the first lawyer to open a law practice in East Palo Alto, a low-income community of color. In 1978, she was appointed Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at Stanford Law School, where she implemented a successful minority admissions program.

In 1982, Governor Jerry Brown appointed Ms. Cordell to the Municipal Court of Santa Clara County making her the first African American woman judge in northern California. In 1988, Judge Cordell won election to the Superior Court of Santa Clara County.

In 2001, she retired from the bench to become Vice Provost & Special Counselor to the President for Campus Relations at Stanford University. She left that position in 2009.

In 2003, accepting no monetary donations, Judge Cordell, ran a grassroots campaign and won a 4-year term on the Palo Alto City Council.

Judge Cordell was the Independent Police Auditor for the City of San Jose for five years (2010-2015). Under her leadership, the office gained national prominence.

In 2016, Judge Cordell chaired a Blue-Ribbon Commission in Santa Clara County that investigated the jails in the aftermath of the murder of an inmate by jail guards; she also served on a Blue Ribbon Panel that evaluated the culture of the San Francisco Police Department after racist and sexist text messages surfaced.

In 2018, Judge Cordell was the voice of the opposition and campaigned vigorously against the recall of Judge Aaron Persky.

Judge Cordell has been an on-camera legal analyst for CBS-5 television and a guest commentator on programs such as Court TV, MSNBC's "The Weekend with Joshua Johnson," and "The Mehdi Hasan Show," as well as National Public Radio.

She is the co-founder of the African American Composer Initiative ([www.aacinitiative.org](http://www.aacinitiative.org)).

Judge Cordell is a mother who lives in Palo Alto with her partner of 30+ years. In her spare time, Judge Cordell is a pianist, vocalist, portrait artist, cartoonist. Her recently released memoir, *Her Honor*, a finalist for the California Book Award, is published by Celadon, a division of Macmillan Publishing.

*Follow her on Twitter: @judgecordell. Website: [www.judgecordell.com](http://www.judgecordell.com)*