

To: Committee on Appellate Courts
From: Ronald M. George, Chief Justice of California (ret.)
Date: March 20, 2022
Re: Nomination of Hal Cohen to Appellate Lawyer Hall of Fame

Working with Hal Cohen remains one of the highlights of my 38 years of service on the California bench. For almost 20 years, he and I collaborated in resolving the complex issues that reach the state's high court.

Arduous as the process sometimes seemed, it was always a true pleasure to work with Hal in confronting this task. His contributions were invaluable, whether in working directly on the cases that I assigned to my chambers, in reviewing the work product of other attorneys on my staff, or in providing valuable input in cases assigned to one of the other justices.

Added to these duties, Hal's responsibilities included serving as the court's supervising attorney during my 14 years as Chief Justice. The latter responsibilities required the exercise not only of substantial legal skills but also the ability to personally attempt to resolve conflicts among justices and staff who might hold strong views on issues that often had a highly significant impact on the law and on society in general. I do not know of any person who devoted his or her time and skill in these efforts to greater effect, and with greater modesty, than Hal.

Although endowed with an encyclopedic knowledge of the law, Hal never had an agenda of his own. He was always guided by a dispassionate commitment to assist the court in applying the law by coming to a fair, just, and well-reasoned disposition of the matter before it. Well beyond Hal's tenure at the court his efforts, although rendered anonymously, will continue to enhance the development of the law in California and, by our state's example, in other jurisdictions as well.

Hal has excelled in the practice of appellate law. His contributions clearly merit recognition as exemplifying the highest values and level of attainment in the legal profession. I do not know of any individual more deserving of inclusion in the Appellate Lawyer Hall of Fame than Hal Cohen.