

Deb Graceffa Esq.
-The Graceffa Dispute Resolution Center-
Mediation / Neutral Evaluation / Consulting / Training

Before practicing law, Deb Graceffa, Esq. founded multiple businesses, including working as a real estate broker and developer. She started her first “business” at age 7 when she bought a giant bag of candy bars at the local corner store before school started, and resold them at school during the day, doubling her initial investment. While her teachers certainly didn’t appreciate her side hustle, it launched her thinking about how to creatively resolve problems...she wanted a jacket her parents wouldn’t buy for her, so she bought it for herself with her candy sale proceeds.

After her successful ventures in business, Deb launched her legal career over 18 years ago, practicing in the arenas of civil litigation, real estate litigation and real estate transactions. As an attorney, she represented all sides of thousands of disputes, gaining a balanced, 360-degree view of how to resolve legal problems. Deb’s combined business and legal experience gave her a unique background to tackle and resolve disputes directly, creatively and efficiently.

Over the years as a litigator, Deb recognized that there was a growing and dire need for a new breed of dispute resolution that involved more than shuttle diplomacy, old-school scare tactics by retired judges and scorched-earth litigation. To that end, she founded **the Graceffa Dispute Resolution Center** to offer a more modern approach to dispute resolution. In addition to traditional methods of dispute resolution, the Center weaves in a creative approach and offers a varied "toolbox" to resolve disputes including: **collaborative litigation during the dispute resolution process; direct and honest neutral evaluation of matters; education for attorneys and their clients; consistent and meaningful follow-up if a matter does not settle right away; and a more consultative approach to dispute resolution than is the norm.** No more scare tactics and no more cajoling parties to settle. Those days are over.

Residential and Commercial Real Estate Matters and Disputes

- Realtor/Broker Negligence/Breach of Fiduciary Duty/Failure to Disclose
- Failure to Disclose Material Facts in Real Estate Transactions – Buyers & Sellers
- Unlawful & Forcible Detainers
- Wrongful & Constructive Evictions/Habitability/Retaliation
- Owner Move-In Disputes
- Rent Board Actions and Violations of Rent Control and Just Cause Ordinances
- Lease Disputes – Residential and Commercial
- Commercial Lease Negotiations
- Failed Real Estate Transactions (Residential and Commercial)
- Breach of Contract – Real Estate and General
- Earnest Money Deposit Disputes in Residential Purchase and Sales
- Litigation Regarding Flipped Properties/Construction Defects
- Disputes Regarding Private Real Estate Financing
- Strawbuyer, Co-Borrower Disputes
- Commission Disputes
- Quiet Title & Partition Disputes

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- HOA Disputes
- Receiverships & Actions by Government Entities Against Property Owners
- Foreclosure Disputes
- Private Purchase and Sale Agreements
- Disputes Between Real Estate Brokerages and Clients Regarding Listing Agreements
- Easement, Boundary, Trespass, Nuisance and Neighbor Disputes
- Marvin Claims and Constructive/Beneficial Interest Claims
- Co-Ownership (Business and Real Estate) Disputes

Construction Defects Matters and Disputes

- Construction Defect - Residential and Commercial
- Contractor and Developer Disputes

Civil / Commercial Matters and Disputes

- Embezzlement and Fraud Actions – Real Estate and Commercial/Business
- Defamation
- Probate Litigation & Elder Financial Abuse
- Dissolution and Disputes Regarding Business and Real Estate Partnerships
- Marvin Actions
- Fee Disputes Between Attorney and Client
- Personal Injury
- Civil Harassment
- Restraining Orders and Stay Away Orders
- Civil Assault and Battery
- High Conflict Disputes Between Parties in Relationship (Family, Neighbors, Co- Workers, Business Partners, Employer/Employee, Property Co-Owners)
- Diversity and Inclusion Issues and Disputes in Schools and the Workplace

Administrative Law Matters

- Professional Liability Claims Against Real Estate Brokers/Agents and Attorneys
- Administrative Actions by the Department/Bureau of Real Estate
- Permit and Code-Compliance Matters

Past and Present Activities and Affiliations

- Alameda County Superior Court ADR Program - Court Approved Mediator
- California Association of Realtors (C.A.R.) Mediation Panel Member and Speaker
- Alameda County Bar Association Fee Arbitrator for fee disputes between attorneys and clients
- CEB Real Property Advisory Committee - Real Estate
- Mediation Society of San Francisco
- Mediator with the Congress of Neutrals, providing day-of-trial mediations at Contra Costa County Courts
- CourtCall On-Line Dispute Resolution Panel Mediator & Arbitrator
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for youth in the foster care system
- Claims and Litigation Management (CLM) member

Honors and Awards

- “Super Lawyer” – 2015, 2016, 2023; for both real estate and alternative dispute resolution
- “Top Attorney, Northern California’s Outstanding Young Lawyers,” San Francisco Magazine

Education and Licensing

- Juris Doctorate, University of San Francisco School of Law, 2004 – Faculty Scholarship Recipient 2001-2004 • Bachelor of Arts Sociology, Mills College, 1994
- Steven Rosenberg Mediator Training and Certification (40 hours), 2014 & Advanced (16 hours), 2020 • California Real Estate Broker, California Bureau of Real Estate 2003-Present

Representative Trainings / MCLES / Presentations (Partial Listing)

California Association of Realtors: Mediating Residential Purchase Agreement Disputes (July 2022)

Real Estate Brokerage Trainings:

Advising Your Seller Clients About Avoiding Disputes With Tenants & Establishing Better Relationships With Them

What Is Mediation And Why Should Realtors Care

Earnest Money Disputes in Contingency Free Purchase and Sale Agreements

Associated Defense Counsel of California and Nevada: Defending Residential Failure to Disclose Claims (May 2023)

Alameda County Bar Association: Failure to Disclose Claims in Residential Real Estate; Claims, Defenses, Damages and How to Resolve the Cases Cost Effectively in Mediation (July 2023)

Daily Journal California Lawyer: The Hot Real Estate Market Has a Surprising Downside for Sellers (July 2023). Podcast Contributor.

Contra Costa County Bar Association MCLE: How to Respond to Gender Bias and High Conflict Situation (September 2021)

Life Outside of the Law

Deb plays ice hockey, cycles and trains petulant dogs.

“Deb agreed to mediate a bitter construction dispute just before trial, after two former judges had tried and failed to make any settlement headway into opposing counsel’s tornado of shady tactics, obfuscation, and bullying. Deb settled the case.

She gains full command of complicated facts and laws. She possesses the social and emotional dexterity to communicate with compassion, intelligence, and humor. She possesses the strength to be blunt. She listens. She brings appropriate doses of reality to both sides. She gains the respect of even unruly participants. She has the creativity to see avenues of resolution. She holds the commitment and the vision, even when 5 pm has come and gone, to sparing parties the many disruptions and costs of trial.” —Silicon Valley litigator