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Sam Fernandez, longtime Dodgers general counsel, joins JAMS

By Douglas Saunders Sr.

Daily Journal Staff Writer

Retired general counsel for the Los Angeles Dodgers, Santiago “Sam” Fernandez, has joined the panel of neutrals at JAMS.

Fernandez, who oversaw the team’s legal affairs for 38 years, will take on matters relating to business/commercial, entertainment and sports, employment, intellectual property and personal injury/torts cases.

“Everything I’ve encountered is just top-notch, professional, and incredibly friendly. It’s been a great experience, and I’m delighted to have joined JAMS,” Fernandez said.

Fernandez joined the Los Angeles Dodgers as general counsel on June 1, 1984. During his tenure, he oversaw all the team’s legal affairs, and his duties have included negotiating and drafting contracts with the team’s broadcasting partners, concessionaires, sponsors, and players, licensing the team’s marks and other intellectual property, leasing the stadium for concerts and films and supervising all litigation.

“I had a great teacher, Professor Gail Bird, at Hastings in the trust and estates class, and as a result of that experience, when I joined Latham & Watkins, I asked to spend some time working in the tax and probate department at the firm,” he said. “The probate group was a small but significant group, and I got to work with Richard Kimbrough, the estate planning lawyer for the O’Malley and Seidler families.”



SANTIAGO “SAM” FERNANDEZ, ESQ.

To keep up with the increasingly complicated world of baseball, Peter O’Malley asked the firm to assign an attorney to work as resident counsel with the ballclub. At that time, Fernandez didn’t have any previous experience managing the legal affairs of a major sports franchise. This position was only meant to be temporary, but 38 years later, it proved that Fernandez could hit a home run in the legal world.

“I thought my career would be in the litigation department focusing on environmental law. The last thing I envisioned was going in-house with not just a Major League Baseball team but my favorite baseball team of all time,” he said. “I’ve been a Dodger fan since I picked the Dodgers in the ‘63 World Series. I not only got to meet Sandy Koufax, I got to work with him and got to know him.”

Fernandez worked on matters ranging from establishing the Dodgers’ training facility in the Dominican Republic in 1986 to serving on the board of directors of Major League Baseball Properties Inc. He has also served on boards of many charitable organizations.

Santiago Fernandez, Esq., is a mediator and arbitrator at JAMS. He joined the JAMS panel after nearly 40 years overseeing legal affairs for the Los Angeles Dodgers. He can be reached at SFernandez@jamsadr.com.

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