

## JAMS Promotes Taylor to CEO

**LEGAL:** Oversees 320 employees, 27 centers

■ By KEVIN COSTELLOE

IRVINE — **Kim Taylor** sees clear business advantages in mediation and arbitration over the traditional litigation route for resolving disputes as her firm handles around 22,000 cases annually as evidence.

On Oct. 1, Taylor assumed the role of CEO at Irvine-based Irvine-based JAMS, which provides confidential resolutions of a broad spectrum of disputes,



**Kim Taylor**  
CEO, President  
JAMS

including commercial, employment and labor matters, as well as personal injury cases and family law, to name a few. Taylor will continue to serve as president, a position she has held for the past three and a half years.

Taylor emphasizes that the opposing parties “have control over the process” with the ability to choose “neutrals,” independent contractors who actually make a decision or help the parties reach a settlement.

The alternative dispute resolution path (ADR) provides “cost savings, time savings and efficiency overall”

especially when courts are backed up on the civil side. ADR itself is a “very broad umbrella term.”

Taylor is a 1995 graduate of **Ventura/Santa Barbara College of Law** and has been with JAMS for more than a quarter century.

The JAMS headquarters is located at 5 Park Plaza in Irvine. That’s where the back-office functions are located, including finance, human resources, IT, marketing and



**Alternative dispute resolution services firm JAMS handles about 22K cases a year**

corporate.

The company was founded in 1979 as **Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services**, and the name was later shortened to JAMS.

### Handling Virtually Every Type of Case

“The vast majority of what we do are commercial cases, where it’s business-to-business or you have sophisticated parties that have negotiated the inclusion of an arbitration clause in their contracts,” she told the Business Journal on Oct. 2. JAMS does not publish the names of the parties.

The firm can handle “virtually every type of case” when it comes to mediation. The case load is split roughly 50-50 between mediation and arbitration.

“We handle everything from family law matters, employment disputes, personal injury cases, complex insurance, intellectual property disputes even between some of the big tech companies where they’re arguing over proprietary information, class actions, mass tort settlements,” Taylor said.

That includes divorces and disputes involving hundreds of millions of dollars – and everything in-between, according to her.

Right now, the company has around 450 independent contractor “neutrals” and approximately 320 employees located at 27 resolution centers around the country.

Taylor notes that the arbitration awards are enforceable in court where needed, while mediation typically results in settlements that are also enforceable.

She notes that in California, for example, virtually all civil cases filed in court go through an ADR process at some point.

“And that’s just absolutely growing across

the country,” she said.

### Settling Disputes with AI

On Oct. 10, JAMS announced the launch of **JAMS Next**, an initiative that will leverage AI-powered tools to streamline the dispute resolution process. JAMS Next reinforces the organization’s commitment to making advanced tools available to attorneys and their clients, panelists and associates.

She said the JAMS dispute resolution panels include both lawyers and judges.

One goal of the company is to help the parties avoid conflict where possible.

She adds that JAMS business has been steadily picking up as more potential litigants seek alternative ways to resolve disputes.

“We see growth year over year,” Taylor said.

Sometimes JAMS assists in allocating money from large-scale awards, such as claims against a big drug manufacturer.

The firm has also been involved in the \$13.5-billion **Fire Victim Trust** in the PG&E Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceeding that relates to fires in Northern California in 2015, 2017 and 2018, when people lost homes and businesses.

“Some of our folks were involved in allocating that money to the injured parties,” according to the JAMS CEO.

Taylor took over the CEO role from **Chris Poole**, who has become the CEO emeritus.

In addition to Taylor’s new role as CEO, the duties of CFO **Nate Brooks** have been expanded to include the post of chief operations officer. ■

### JAMS



- **FOUNDED:** 1979 as Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services
- **HQ:** Irvine
- **CEO/PRESIDENT:** Kim Taylor
- **CEO EMERITUS:** Chris Poole
- **CFO/COO:** Nate Brooks
- **BUSINESS:** Mediation, arbitration
- **EMPLOYEES:** 320, plus 450 contractors known as neutrals
- **WEBSITE:** jamsadr.com
- **NOTABLE:** Kim Taylor, who took over as CEO on Oct. 1, is also president