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dge Marlo's new career: Taking work away from judges

By LANE WALLACE STAFF WRITER

John A. Marlo will retire from resolving County, Marlo chose Watsonville. cases as a Santa Cruz Superior Court ness resolving cases.

Marlo, 58, is joining seven other judges of a small community." in San Jose in Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services, a firm that resolves issues before they go to trial.

Marlo, who announced today he will rehas long been a stickler for urging attorneys to resolve cases, both civil and

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criminal, without a trial. "I settled one case when the jury was deliberating," he

The firm's initials - JAMS - is almost the same as Marlo's JAM initials. "I won't have to get new monograms for my shirts," joked Marlo.

The JAMS office is in downtown San Jose, a few blocks from Marlo's "office" in the late '50s. "I was the cop on the beat at grown. First and Santa Clara streets," said Marlo, who has a yellowed newspaper photo essay about his policeman days in his Santa Cruz chambers.

Already married and raising a family, Marlo worked full-time as a policeman and attended law school full-time.

Marlo didn't have a magic formula for doing so many things at once. "You just do it," he said. He still maintains a busy schedule, operating a small vineyard on his Aptos property and dabbling in inventions. He developed a shower and portable barbecue some years ago, and is now working on a bumper reinforcement for \$150," he said.

school in 1961 and practiced civil law be- Municipal Court called Project Busy. fore Gov. Ronald Reagan appointed him to the bench in February 1973.

room in Santa Cruz or one in Watsonville. Although he had rarely been to South

"I never regretted it," said Marlo, who judge next month, and go right into busi- stayed in Watsonville until he was elected to Superior Court in 1986. "I liked the idea

> In a small, one-judge town, Marlo said, "You have more contact with the community."

People charged with crimes in Watsontire in March after 20 years on the bench, ville are less likely to ask for a trial than those in Santa Cruz, Marlo said. "In Watsonville, the person readily admits guilt and accepts punishment" on small cases. he said.

In 1986, Marlo defeated another Municipal Court judge, Rich McAdams, for a Superior Court vacancy. He's had a number of high-profile Superior Court cases, but there's one he particularly remem-

Kenneth Luther Jr. was convicted in 1987 of the 1986 murder of Joseph Vomvolakis, a former star football player at Cabrillo College. Vomvolakis was shot when he interrupted a car burglary.

"After I sentenced him I cried. It was so sad seeing the tragedy for the family,' Marlo said. Luther got the maximum sentence, 19 years to life.

"I've always prided myself on being a family man," said Marlo, who with his wife

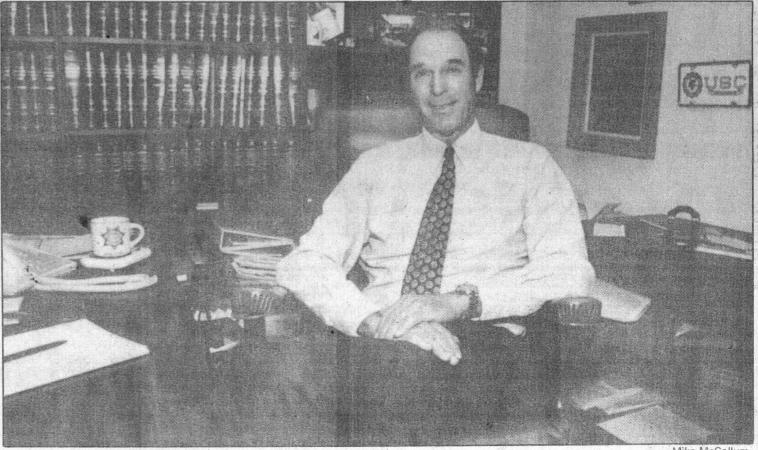
Marlo has a reputation for tough sentences, especially on drug and sex cases. Attorneys often use their one "free" disqualification of a judge against Marlo in such cases, taking their chances with an-

The growth of drug use over the last few decades is a big reason "for the lack of family unity," Marlo said. "You don't need to be a rocket scientist to see that."

Marlo said he's against legalizing drugs and has opposed the trend toward leniency in drug cases. "If the maximum fine is assignments, including some in Santa \$150 (for a marijuana case), I'll impose Cruz, in addition to his private work in

In contrast to Marlo's hard line on some Marlo said he hopes to get a visiting Marlo moved to Aptos after finishing law cases is a program he ran in Watsonville assignment in Los Angeles, where one of

cases, usually petty thefts, he would dis- when I come in the courtroom," Marlo Marlo was given the choice of a court- miss the case in six months if they re- said with a laugh.



Patricia raised five children, all now Santa Cruz Superior Court Judge John Marlo, who began his judicial career in Watsonville Municipal Court, will retire after 20 years on the bench.

> mained employed. He got some business owners to agree to hire people in the

Marlo kept the program despite some criticism from local attorneys that he was pushing hiring of criminals. "The program worked," said Marlo, who said one of his proudest moments was receiving an award for Project Busy from a national association of personnel managers.

Although he'll be officially retired, Marlo said he plans to take some visiting-judge San Jose.

his sons, also named John, is a bailiff.

Marlo would tell defendants in small "I want to have him stand at attention

Defendant strikes a chord with jazz-afficianado judge

Judge John Marlo looked at the name on his docket, then looked up at the man before him on alcohol-related charges.

"Ron Crotty? Bass. Dave Brubeck group. 1952," said Marlo, a longtime jazz fan.

Crotty was amazed. "I can still see the look on his face," said Marlo, recalling the 1975 incident in Watsonville Municipal Court.

Marlo wrote to Brubeck, who sent \$400 to help Crotty. Marlo said he couldn't accept it-and returned it to Brubeck, but the correspondence led to a friendship.

Brubeck has been to Marlo's home, and Marlo has made it a point to see Brubeck when he plays in the area.

"For a jazz fan, that's guite a deal," Marlo said.

Marlo doesn't know what became of Crotty, other than hearing that Crotty attended Brubeck's 50th wedding celebration last year.