I have worked for Los Angeles County for 22 years as a criminal defense attorney.

I became a defense attorney after having dealt with the nightmare of having a loved one accused of a crime and seeing that the justice system was extremely biased against ethnic miniorities. He was charged with drug possession for sale, and after seeing all the disruption that revolved around an arrest, I decided, I wanted to be a voice for the underprivileged, unrepresented and underserved. Moreover, I wanted nothing more than to practice indigent criminal defense for Los Angeles County.

I was born and raised in LA County. I was born in Hawthorne to immigrant parents that moved to Los Angeles from Nicaragua to avoid the injustices of a harsh government. I grew up in South Los Angeles. I attended the local parochial school, St. Agnes, then Ramona Convent High School, then UCLA undergrad, then Loyola Law School. I was encouraged by my parents every step of the way to study hard, and work hard in order to achieve more than they ever could.

I achieved my goal of working as a criminal defense attorney for LA county in January 1997 when I was hired by the Public Defender’s Office. I handled felony prelims, adult misdemeanor trials, and juvenile adjudications. After my juvenile rotation, I was given the position of calendar deputy. At this point in my career, I had handled 75 preliminary hearings, 50 misdemeanor trials, and several adjudications including 5 transfer hearings.

As calendar deputy, I was responsible for assisting the Head Deputy with the training of the new misdemeanor hires. I also helped coordinate the daily cases being handled by the attorneys I supervised. After a year in that position, I transferred to the Alternate Public Defender’s Office.

In 2001 I started as a felony attorney with the Alternate Public Defender’s Office. I handled all types of felonies from simple drug possession cases, to serious and violent cases, including death penalty cases. In that position I investigated and prepared cases for preliminary hearings, pre-trial motions, sentencing and trials. I worked with my clients, social workers, investigators, paralegals, and experts in order to obtain the best results.

In November 2007, I became the Deputy-in-Charge of the Misdemeanor Unit. By this time in my career, I had handled over hundreds of preliminary hearings and trials. As the DIC of training, I oversaw the operation of the Central Misdemeanor unit which included training all new hires. I was able to mentor and help develop many of the staff that we have at the APD’s office today. I was responsible for training all new hires and teaching them APD policies and procedure, APD culture, continuing legal education, and supervising them with case preparation, motion work, and trial work. I developed an APD misdemeanor training manual which is still used today.

In 2010 I was promoted to Head Deputy of the Misdemeanor Unit. Along with my previous duties, I was now responsible for office-wide training, attending justice partners collaborative meetings, and department administrative work. In terms of the training, I would schedule speakers and coordinate topics for our office-wide lectures. I would make sure that our attorneys were well trained on any changes in the law, Immigration updates, DNA, technological advances and any new approach to defending cases. I would bring in experts to train our attorneys. I also provided lectures, and presentations from time to time. At this point in my career, I was also involved in helping my Department Head, Janice Fukai, with hiring.

In Feb 2012 I was promoted to Acting Division Chief, this position became permanent in Feb 2015. As Division Chief, I was responsible for Central operation, overseeing 100 employees, with 5 Head Deputies. I handled more administrative functions such as: employees relations, performance management, policy of equity compliance. I helped develop departmental strategies for implementing legislative changes such as prop. 57, prop.36, prop. 47, and Prop. 64 in order to help our clients get the benefit of these legislative changes. At this point, my responsibilities grew in terms of employee resources, employee development, discipline, budget, and analysis of departmental needs. During my time as Division Chief, APD was given the responsibility of the second-tier juvenile defense. I helped our Director successfully implement her vision of getting us into juvenile branches by the request two-week deadline.

In Feb 2018, I was appointed to Chief Deputy. I help Janice Fukai run the office. I oversee an operation of approximately 300 employees. I make daily decisions that effect change within the office.

Blue Ribbon Committee, ODR’s LEAD steering committee,

I also have served on the Governing Boards of the Mexican American

Bar Association and California Rural Assistance League.

Homeless Initiative Steering Committee

City attorney- Gang diversion

LA DOOR- City Attorney steering committee

Mayor’s Prop. 47 Diversion

HEART- homeless engagement and Response Team

Jackey Lacey-Mental Health Diversion

ODR- steering committee

MacArthur

LEAD-advisory steering committee

CENS-

Cha