

# Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice

## Ruth Chance Lecture

---



**Diane Bellas**

**Alameda County Public Defender**

**Date: Monday, August 27**

**Time: 12:45 p.m.**

**Location: 140 Boalt**

### **The Genesis and Evolution of the Alameda County Public Defender**

Diane Bellas '81, was a student at Boalt when she began working as a law clerk in the Alameda County Public Defender's Office in 1979. While a line lawyer, she represented clients throughout the County in countless criminal cases, including more than 50 murder cases, as well as in the civil conservatorship and mental health courts. Her last trial, occurring shortly before her appointment to the administrative position of Public Defender in 2000, was a double-murder death penalty case in which the jury returned a verdict of life without possibility of parole. In 2004, at the inception of the Alameda County Homeless and Caring Court, Bellas resumed representation of individual clients; the court convenes monthly in locations that provide services to the marginally housed or homeless, people in recovery, and the working poor. Bellas serves by Senate appointment on the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice and on the board of C.U.R.A. (Carnales Unidos Reformando Adictos).