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To the Daily Journal:

I am writing to nominate Steven Rosenberg for inclusion in your Top Neutrals list. I have had personal experience with Steve in two cases. Both were construction defect cases brought against my clients, for whom I was acting as insurance coverage counsel. I have also been in countless other mediations with both judge-mediators and attorney-mediators.

Given the 400-word restriction, it is possible to highlight only a few of Steve's strengths that place him among the best in the state. These include a practiced and conscious *patience* that permits the attorney and client to explain their case without interruption or judgmental consequence. Another strength is a *persistence* based on the recognition that the keys to a settlement lie below the formal positions taken and statements made by the parties and can be discovered by the mediator only through diligence and concentrated effort. Throughout the process, Steve displays an *ability to listen* that demonstrates his respect for the parties and commitment to the process. That critical faculty is essential to a full understanding of the facts, interests, motives, objectives, contentions, emotions, and issues that define the parameters of the case. In addition to these, Steve possesses a *sense of humor*, timely employed, that softens even the most strident advocates, eases the ever-present tensions borne of conflict and narrows gaps in perception by the common bond of shared laughter.

These attributes are augmented by a *bold spirit*, marked by a willingness and ability to challenge a party's assumptions, premises, pre-conceptions, or positions, where such testing is warranted by unrealistic, obstinate or ill-informed thinking. When Steve engages in such *reality-testing*, it is judiciously and tactfully employed and always respectful of those to whom it is directed.

As part of his mediation practice, Steve has for many years provided mediation training for judges, lawyers and others, including individualized training for the Court of Appeal mediation panel and the United States Postal Service. These training programs derive from his many years of experience as a practicing mediator, his thoughtful reflections on the art and practice of mediation, and his conviction that mediators must adhere to ethical standards of practice.

Samuel F. Barnum