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Matthew A. Lopes Jr., Esq.

Principal

Matthew “Matty” A. Lopes Jr. is a Principal with Pannone Lopes Devereaux & O’Gara LLC. For most of his 35-year legal career, he has been actively involved in the court oversight of correctional systems and is a nationally recognized Special Master in correctional reform litigation.

For the past 26 years, he has served as the Special Master for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in the matter of *Coleman v. Newsom*. As Special Master in this case, Matty leads a team of experts and monitors in overseeing the care provided to more than 30,000 seriously mentally ill inmates throughout the 34 institutions within the California prison system.

Prior to his current role, Matty served as a Court Monitor, Deputy Special Master and Special Master, respectively, in three additional major remedial correctional cases under the supervision of the United States District Courts of Georgia, Texas and Rhode Island.

- In *Alberti v. Sheriff of Harris County* (Texas), Matty led negotiations to achieve an effective remedy for an overcrowded detention system built for 4,500 that had swelled to 14,000.
- In *Fambro v. Fulton County* (Georgia), Matty successfully oversaw the implementation of remedial plans approved by the court regarding overcrowding, medical services, and sanitation.
- *Inmates of the Youth Training School v. Affleck* (Rhode Island) was filed against the original Boys Training School. The court found that the defendants had been handicapped by lack of adequate facilities and trained personnel. As Special Master, Matty oversaw remediation activities and successfully worked with the Rhode Island General Assembly to approve construction funding for the modernized present-day facility that opened in 2009.

In addition to his current practice as a Special Master in the *Coleman v. Newsom* case, Matty also leads the Alternative Dispute Resolution practice for Pannone Lopes Devereaux & O’Gara, as well as PLDO Strategies LLC, the government relations and communications subsidiary of the law firm, representing organizations ranging from Fortune 100 companies to nonprofit businesses, including organizations within the transportation, pharmaceutical, education, food service, health care, and insurance industries, among others.

While Matty is extremely proud of his work in prison reform and oversight, he is equally proud of his role in successfully advocating for the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center’s Justice Reinvestment Initiative to improve Rhode Island’s criminal justice system through the enactment of legislation supporting rehabilitation and informed decision-making in sentencing, probation, and parole.

He is also proud to have been intimately involved in the successful Rhode Island 2020 ballot initiative to remove the centuries-old word “plantations” from the official name of the State of Rhode Island.

Having once interned for former Chief Justice of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, A. Leon Higginbotham Jr., Matty has also been inspired to promote and advocate for increased minority representation and diversity in the selection and appointment of Rhode Island’s judiciary.

Matty earned his J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School and his bachelor’s degree from Dartmouth College. In 2022, Matty was selected to receive the Neil J. Houston, Jr. Memorial Award is recognized as the most prestigious award presented within Rhode Island’s criminal justice system. In 2021, he was selected for inclusion into The National Black Lawyers Top 100 in Rhode Island, an honor given to a distinct group of lawyers who have demonstrated superior skills in their fields of law or who have excelled in areas promoting diversity. In addition, he has been named to *The Best Lawyers in America* list for over 10 years, and recognized as Rhode Island’s 2021 Best Lawyer “Lawyer of the Year” by his peers and clients for his work in government relations.