

RELAC Director Evelyn Gutierrez Dies Unexpectedly

by Judy Hammond, RELAC Director and Newsletter Editor

Evelyn Gutierrez, a member of the RELAC Board of Directors since 2016, died unexpectedly on Oct. 4. She was found unresponsive in her San Dimas home by a personal aide who arrived at 4 p.m. The cause of death is not yet known. However, she had been in contact with the RELAC office several times earlier in the day and had not indicated she was not feeling well.

Gutierrez, 79, was director of workplace programs and marketing in the Chief Executive Office when she retired in 2003, a position she had held the last 15 years of her 35-year County career.

She was appointed to the RELAC Board on April 5, 2016 to fill the unexpired term of Martin Golds, who retired due to health reasons. The term expired that December and Gutierrez won election to the seat. She was reelected in 2020 and recently was reelected to a new term, which would have begun Jan. 1, 2023.

Two years ago the Board of Directors elected her to serve on the Executive Committee as secretary, and she was reelected to that position again in 2022. She served as chair of the Special Events, Community Support, and Membership Outreach committees.

“Evelyn was one of the hardest working and most dedicated people I have ever encountered,” said RELAC President Brian Berger. “She leaves a tremendous void, both personally and professionally, within RELAC and within her many charitable endeavors at large.”

His comments were echoed by immediate past president Dave Muir. “Evelyn was one of our most dedicated and committed Board members. This is a great loss to our Board and retirees at large.”

The Board of Supervisors honored Gutierrez in 2021 for 18 years of service as a member of the County Quality and Productivity Commission. She was appointed to the commission in 2003 by Supervisor Gloria Molina and later by the Chief Administrative Office following Molina’s retirement. The scroll presented by the Board of Supervisors upon her resignation from the QPC in October 2021 cited Gutierrez’s role as first vice chair, chair of the Awards Program from 2013-18, and work on the Productivity Investment Board, Leadership Conference, and Strategic Foresight Working Group.

Gutierrez said she was interested in becoming a RELAC director to promote membership, expand activities, and enhance awareness of County services that interest and benefit retirees.

“Los Angeles County and its employees are my second family. My dedication and loyalty to L.A. County has been at the core of my public sector career. I am honored for the opportunity to continue to serve Los Angeles County as a member of RELAC’s Board of Directors.”

Gutierrez was a devoted County volunteer since her retirement. Besides serving on the Q&P Commission, she was a volunteer at the East Los Angeles Library, where she worked in the bookstore and helped raise funds for children’s programs and new books, and coordinated the

Cesar Chavez educational program. She was a board member and secretary of the LA County Library Foundation, assisting with corporate fund-raising for countywide programs like the Online Homework Help Line. She was also an active member of Saint Thomas Aquinas Church in Monterey Park.

Gutierrez graduated from East Los Angeles College and attended Cal State Los Angeles and Cal Poly Pomona. She is survived by her sister, Deborah Watts.