

66 Years of Dedicated Service
to L.A. County Retirees



RELAC newsletter

Your Pension and Health Care Watchdog
www.relac.org • e-mail: admin@relac.org • (800) 537-3522

President's Message

by Brian Berger

RELAC has a very important and special event coming up. I want to remind you to "Save the Date" of Thursday, June 6, 2024. It is our annual Recognition Luncheon, which will be held at Almansor Court in Alhambra. More details about the luncheon are elsewhere in the newsletter, and the reservation form is on the website, www.relac.org.

There is more good news. Significant upgrades are being made to RELAC's office technology. The Office Management Committee is working hard on these systems and staff with technology skills are being hired to improve operations and customer service. It is important that RELAC operations provide the efficiency and timely service our members expect and should receive. Frankly, all of us retirees need to be proficient in and able to use the new tech devices (cellphones, iPads, tablets and laptops). On more than one occasion, my two, 13-year-old twins, have pointed out to me (Grandpa), "Papa, your system is so old." It is not a stretch to say the technology upgrades are long overdue.

In other RELAC news, the recent General Membership meeting, held on Thursday, March 28, was a great gathering. It was well-attended, standing room only actually, for an informative presentation on "Staying Safer in the Digital World," conducted by RELAC Director and technology expert James Brekk. It is not an exaggeration to say Director Brekk stole the show with humorous yet poignant videos on common errors made in creating passwords. Although members and guests had many questions about the subject, Brekk answered all of them, and will follow-up with additional information at our September General Membership meeting. A final date and location for the September event will be published in the next newsletter.



If you were unable to join us in March, don't worry. The presentation will be posted to our website so take the time to visit. I want to commend Board member Victoria Pipkin-Lane and RELAC staff for working together to put on an amazing meeting.

The Board of Directors recently voted to expand its calendar of events to add more fun-filled activities for members, including a potential night at the Hollywood Bowl, a picnic at one of Los Angeles County's scenic parks, and hopefully "A Day at the Races" during Santa Anita's next season. These future events are in addition to our ongoing slate of activities, such as the annual Scholarship Awards program, bimonthly golf tournaments, the annual March of Dimes March for Babies, and a Dodger Game scheduled for Friday, August 9, 2024.

The men in blue are a force to be reckoned with now that Shohei Ohtani, renowned pitcher and designated hitter, has joined the squad. Currently (early April), Ohtani has three homeruns, eight RBIs, 19 hits and a .345 average. He, along with Mookie Betts, Freddie Freeman, and pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto, are putting on a show for baseball fans. You don't want to miss this great opportunity to see the Dodger greats in action.

We are hopeful that a number of attendees at the March 28 meeting, who spoke with RELAC Vice President Linda Hopkins, will follow up on their desire to volunteer and help with RELAC events. We welcome all those who want to participate as associate members on a committee, and maybe even as a Board member. I mention opportunities to serve on the Board regularly in my column. Right now, it feels good to see the energy and desire to be active RELAC supporters shown by potential new volunteers. Trust me, there are several committee chairs who would gladly welcome new members.



RELAC Recognition Luncheon June 6 at Almansor Court

It's that time of year when RELAC honors its scholarship recipients, March of Dimes team, and veterans who have served in the various branches of the U.S. Military.

The annual gala will be held Thursday, June 6, 2024 at Almansor Court, 700 Almansor St., Alhambra, CA 91801. No-host social hour begins at 11 a.m., followed by luncheon and program at 12 noon.

Reservation form is on Page 12 of the newsletter, and on the RELAC website, www.relac.org.



Overflow Audience Learns How to Stay Safer in the Digital World

by Victoria Pipkin-Lane, Editor

"If your password is 123456, I want you to change it right now," said James Brekk, RELAC Director and business and technology consultant, as he educated an overflow crowd at the March General Membership meeting on "Staying Safer in the Digital World." The informative, and sometimes humorous, keynote address focused on how individuals may take charge of their digital life.

"Make your e-mail and bank passwords unique and memorable," he said. "Length can be better than overly complex," and use a password manager. While many people may prefer to use free Wi-Fi services, the former Chief Information Security Officer for LACERA said, "double check Wi-Fi names, and turn off Wi-Fi and Bluetooth when not in use, such as when traveling, and instead use your mobile plan."

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News From LACERA

by JJ Popowich
Assistant Executive Officer

LACERA has successfully navigated its annual “March Madness” season, the months from December through March when we see the most retirements. We processed more than 1,200 retirement elections for March. All in all, this season has been average to slightly higher than normal in terms of the number of retirements.

I have two important topics on my mind to discuss: 1) An update on implementation of the Board of Retirement’s 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, and 2) a few comments about Powers of Attorney designations. **Strategic Plan:** We have several teams working on nine different strategic plan initiatives that fall under one of the five Strategic Priorities set by the Board of Retirement: 1) Superior Member Experience, 2) Innovation through Technology, 3) Investing in our People, 4) Compliance & Enterprise Risk, and 5) Fiscal Durability. Each initiative under these Priorities is designed to improve the service we provide our members (including all survivors and payees), improve our overall efficiency and ethical compliance with the laws and LACERA’s governing principles, as well as security and financial responsibility.

As the Executive Sponsor for the Superior Member Experience Priority, I thought this month we would focus on what that team is working on. We have a team, led by our new Division Manager of Member Services, Tatiana Bayer, who is creating a Member Experience Council that will focus on ensuring we deliver a consistent superior member experience during each stage of a member’s journey.

What is a Member Experience program and what’s a journey? A Member Experience program (or MX for short) is a commitment to developing a superior experience for each member whenever they interact with LACERA. It’s all about looking at how we serve you from your perspective, and making sure we deliver the service through the channel of your choice (how you choose to interact with us), and that we provide the information and support you need to accomplish your LACERA retirement goals.

We do this by identifying the many journeys members may go through during their lifecycle with LACERA. Each journey represents a stage or process that you, as the member, goes through. For example, most people reading this article have gone through the retirement journey – meaning you retired.

By identifying the member journeys, we can begin to map, study, and improve them. To accomplish this goal, the Member Experience Council is working on the Superior Member Experience initiative 1.1: “Ensure a consistent member experience at every stage of the member’s journey,” identify and map each journey and begin to intimately study those journeys. The aim is to develop proposals to improve each journey, and measure our success. We’ll share what we learn and our plans as we develop them.

We have a second team working on the Superior Member Experience initiative 1.4 “Improve and enhance the retiree healthcare experience.” This team, while partnering with the MX Council, is focused exclusively on Retiree Healthcare journeys. Among the exiting ideas they are focusing on is creating a retiree healthcare election road map to help match the County plans to the closest corresponding LACERA retiree healthcare plan, an electronic enrollment process, and finding innovative ways to provide better service to our retirees.

In future columns, I’ll provide more information about the other Strategic Priorities and initiatives we’re working on. In the meantime, you may learn all about the Board of Retirement’s Strategic Plan by visiting www.lacera.com/leadership/strategic-plan. Each Priority is outlined, and in the very near future we’ll share the progress as we go.

Powers of Attorney: I will bring up this item often because it is very important. If you don’t have a LACERA Special Durable Power of Attorney (POA) on file, I highly urge you to consider completing one. LACERA’s privacy policy prohibits us from discussing your account with anyone other than yourself, even your spouse, unless you have authorized us to do so.

Appointing an Attorney-in-Fact – by completing a POA designation, authorizes LACERA to discuss your account with the designated individual. I won’t go into all the details here, but by having a Special Durable POA on file, authorizes someone to act on your behalf in the event you cannot. For example, if you become ill and need to update your contact information or mailing address but are unable to call us or access My LACERA, a POA could help you. Visit www.lacera.com/retirement-planning/power-attorney to learn all about the POA process and how it can help you. I can tell you from experience, it is heartbreaking when a member needs help, but no one has been designated as an attorney-in-fact. Neither family members or friends are able to step in and help.

Investment Report

by Debbie Martin, RELAC Director, Trustee LACERA Board of Investments



There is good news to report, retirees!

LACERA Investment staff has been diligently managing and investing your pension contributions throughout your County employment, and the good news is we’re all reaping the benefits of their prudent actions. LACERA has consistently outperformed its benchmark, achieving a 10 percent annual rate of return on the pension fund as of February 29, 2024, surpassing its seven percent target.

LACERA has a fiduciary responsibility to act in a manner that protects its assets, and it takes this obligation seriously. Question! Have you ever wondered how LACERA determines the best investment strategies to secure your lifelong benefits? The Board of Investments, on which I serve as your elected representative, is tasked with establishing policies and selecting asset allocations for the pension fund.

But how does this process work? It’s through diversification, and entails distributing LACERA assets across various classes, including fixed income, commodities, infrastructure and real estate.

How does this process benefit us retirees? Each asset class interacts differently with others, thus reducing the likelihood of all assets moving in the same direction simultaneously. This diversification serves as a risk management strategy, helping to mitigate potential

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Board of Retirement

by Les Robbins, RELAC Director, Trustee, LACERA Board of Retirement

My journey at LACERA began in 1997, when with the death of Bob Hermann, who was one of my closest friends on the Sheriff’s Department, I ran for the spot that Bob had held for many years. It was a special election which I won easily and I filled the remainder of Bob’s term on the Board of Retirement. Shortly thereafter I ran again and was elected to both the Board of Retirement and the Board of Investments as the primary safety member.

I spent two terms on both the Board of Retirement and the Board of Investments and then retired in December of 2004 and was immediately appointed to the Board of Retirement by Supervisor Don Knabe. He was termed out in 2016 and at that time I cycled off the Board of Retirement. I then ran in 2017 as the retiree representative on the Board of Retirement and won that election where I have remained since that time.

So, as you can see, I have been on the Boards at LACERA for nearly 27 years now and am proud of the fact that I am the longest serving trustee in the history of LACERA. During my tenure I have seen a great many developments in the world of public employee pensions in the State of California. Some of these developments

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RELAC President Brian Berger Shares Leadership Style

by Victoria Pipkin-Lane, Editor



"If I see talent in an individual on my team, I want to open the door for it," said Brian Berger, president of RELAC, who participated in the Los Angeles County Management Council's (LACMC) Spring Conference, held March 14 and 15, 2024 in Santa Barbara. "Government and the Digital Age: The Transition from Failing to Excelling" was the conference theme.

"I respect teamwork and throughout my more than 32 years with the County, I enjoyed working together with my colleagues," he said. "As a result, I made a lot of contacts and developed a network across County Departments. It helped me to get things done quicker," said Berger.

He served on the LACMC panel, titled "Good Leaders Lead, Great Leaders Inspire Greatness in Other Leaders," moderated by Ruben Marquez, Chief of Staff, Public Defender. Also participating on the panel were Sheryl Spiller, retired Director of the Department of Public Social Services, Fred Hungerford, retired Chief Deputy, Public Library, and Arlene Barrera, retired Auditor-Controller.

Spiller favors a "shared leadership style that inspires employees to want to work, not just do a job." Her goal was always "to provide the resources to enable workers to be successful."

Hungerford was a "coach and mentor" to staff, emphasizing the importance of networking within the County. "You need contacts" to help bring the projects from concept to reality, he said.

For Barrera, leadership means building relationships by "sitting down with staff and learning their job process and needs. Everyone has a voice, and when making changes you have to listen to staff," she said.

The LACMC conference audience heard from Hoan Do, an award-winning inspirational speaker and acclaimed author. He was a finalist on NBC's hit show, "American Ninja Warrior." After his keynote speech, Do led a well-received motivational workshop and question and answer session.

County CEO Fesia Davenport presented the "State of the County," and Marcia Mayeda, LACMC President and Director of the Department of Animal Care & Control, presided over the two-day meeting.



RELAC Special Events

(Recreation & Activities)

by Nora Jackson, Chair

RELAC is planning several events for the enjoyment of members and their families. This column also will include other activities open to the public across the County of Los Angeles.

Recognition Luncheon

RELAC's annual Recognition Luncheon will be held on Thursday, June 6, 2024, at Almansor Court, 700 Almansor St., Alhambra, CA 91801. The no-host social hour begins at 11 a.m. Reservation form is on Page 12 of the newsletter and on the website, www.relac.org.

Night at the Dodgers

Once again, it's time for Dodger baseball. RELAC invites members to purchase tickets for the Dodgers v. Pittsburgh Pirates game on Friday, August 9, 2024, 7:00 p.m. A limited number of promotional items, including Dusty Baker bobbleheads, will be given to attendees by the Dodgers.

RELAC members are able to purchase two (2) tickets at a discounted price of \$49 each. Additional tickets will cost \$54, which is still below the general admission cost. Limited Reserved seating is in Sections 6RS and 8RS.

The reservation form is available on the website, www.relac.org. Please mail in your check with the completed reservation form by the deadline, Monday, July 8, 2024. The envelope must be postmarked by the deadline.

Note: Dodger Stadium is a cash-free, paperless venue. All game tickets are digital, and will be e-mailed at least two (2) weeks prior to the game with detailed instructions on how to download tickets to a cellphone. Digital tickets must be shown at entry gates to Dodger Stadium. For additional information and questions, please call RELAC at (626) 308-0532, or e-mail the office, www.admin@relac.org.

Marina Culture Jam

Department of Beaches & Harbors continues its popular Marina Culture Jam Series at Burton Chace Park on Sundays, May 26 and June 9. Free admission. Musical artists to be announced.

Fireworks Show

Save the date for the annual Marina del Rey Fireworks Show on Thursday, July 4. The event is free and parking is limited. For more details, visit <https://beaches.lacounty.gov>.

The Ford

A wide variety of music, dance, theatre and film events are offered throughout the summer at The Ford, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. E, Los Angeles, CA 90068. For performance dates and times, visit <https://www.theford.com>.

Save the Date – December 5, 2024

RELAC's Annual Holiday Luncheon & Toy Drive will be held on Thursday, December 5, 2024, 11:00 a.m., in the Atrium Ballroom of the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, 7320 Greenleaf Ave., Whittier, CA 90602. Additional details will be in RELAC's July-August 2024 Newsletter.

Fire Fighter Specialist Santhoff Retires After 23 Years

It was a very moving retirement ceremony in March for Los Angeles County Fire Fighter Specialist (FFS) Robert Charles Santhoff. He hung his turnout jacket and helmet, and called it a career after 23 years of dedicated service to the Fire Department and residents of the County.

Many presentations were made to FFS Santhoff during the retirement reception held at Fire Station 166 in El Monte, and attended by family members and many of his colleagues.

A special moment occurred when Max, a young man whose life FFS Santhoff saved 21 years ago, joined the festivities. Max said he was happy and honored to be at the reception to celebrate a well-deserved retirement for his dear friend.

In May of 2023, FFS Santhoff and the Station's crew received a Unit Citation during the department's annual Valor Awards for "Caring for Their Own." They provided "thoughtful and meaningful care" to Fire Captain Steven McCann, who passed away from a medical emergency while on duty.

Fire Chief Anthony Marrone, in recognizing all Valor Award recipients said, "these individuals have gone above and beyond the call of duty in skillfully delivering our Department's mission of protecting lives, the environment and property. Our honorees' impressive contributions and actions inspire all of us to search for ways we each can help make this world a better and safer place for everyone."



RELAC Connections

(Serving Members & the Community)

by Linda Hopkins, Chair

The County of Los Angeles has selected RELAC as one of the departments to which employees may make charitable donations. This is a great honor. Our two major fundraising campaigns are already underway and will benefit the March of Dimes (MOD) and the L.A. Regional Food Bank.

We have a \$5,000 goal for MOD and, so far, have donated nearly \$2,000 to the March of Dimes. The fundraising goal for the Food Bank is \$10,000, and a generous donor has announced a fundraising challenge. The donor will match donations up to \$1,000 that are made to RELAC by Memorial Day (Monday, May 27).

Retirees of the Department of Human Resources (DHR) recently raised \$265, which will be divided between both agencies. We encourage retirees from other County Departments to get involved and match or exceed what the DHR retirees have raised.

The link for March of Dimes is www.marchforbabies.org/team/RELAC
The link for the L.A. Regional Food Bank is <https://give.lafoodbank.org/relac-24>

Elder Justice Champions

The Community Advisory Board of NCEA (National Center on Elder Abuse) is receiving applications from retirees, who want to raise awareness of elder abuse and advance elder justice. This is a unique opportunity to leverage your skills, passion and experience to keep older adults safe from abuse and neglect.

There are a variety of ways to get involved. Complete the online application, and submit a resume (optional) to elaine.chen@med.usc.edu.

As the RELAC Board representative for this program, I may be reached via e-mail at lhopkins1054@gmail.com.

Tickets At Work

RELAC members have a new opportunity to save on the purchase of movie tickets, theme parks, rental cars, concerts and sports events at info@email.ticketsatwork.com.



RELAC Vice President Linda Hopkins, second from right, joins DHR retirees for lunch.

Golf News

By Gil Sandoval
RELAC Golf Director



The RELAC Golf Program is off to a rousing start this year with two tournaments already conducted. We had a good turnout for both events, and the weather was mostly ideal for walking the courses.

Now with summer on the horizon, we are preparing for the next event, scheduled for Monday, June 3, at the Santa Anita Golf Course. The entry form is available in the newsletter and on the RELAC website, www.relac.org.

Bring a family member and friend who enjoy golf as you do. We want to grow the Golf Program membership, and encourage you to support this fun activity which provides a good day of recreation and exercise. I am always available to answer your questions and provide additional information, and perhaps a few golf tips. You may reach me at (714) 504-2378 or via e-mail at gil@sandoval40@outlook.com.

Golf Entry Form

Santa Anita Golf Course
405 S. Santa Anita Ave., Arcadia
www.santaanitagc.com

Monday, June 3, 2024 8:00 a.m. start

Please Print

1. Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Fees: \$46.00 PER GOLFER - CART EXTRA

please include addresses and phone of ALL additional members/guests

2. Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

3. Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

4. Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Early ____ Late ____ No preference ____

NOTE: Only ONE GUEST per member.

Enclose check for _____ golfers @ \$46 per golfer.

Make checks payable to RELAC.

Mail to: RELAC-Golf • 1000 So. Fremont Ave., #15, Alhambra, CA 91803-8802

Entry Deadline May 14, 2024

All payments must be in RELAC office

For Office Use:

Date Rec. _____ Amt.\$ _____ Ck# _____

Retired DHS Managers in Action Virtually and In Person

by Barry Hunt
RELAC Member

(Editor's Note: The following information is taken from a recent Retired DHS Managers' Newsletter. RELAC frequently publishes this information as many members are former DHS employees and managers.)



Jason Williams, left, and Barry Hunt

Retired DHS Managers recently were quite active virtually, engaged in teaching, advising, mentoring, coaching, conducting conference presentations, and visiting with friends and family.

Some members attended RELAC's recent General Membership meeting on March 28, and then went down the hall to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Annual Conference and General Assembly, which also held its meeting at the Carson Event Center. The theme of SCAG's meeting was "Artificial Intelligence and Its Impact on Society: Economically, Culturally and Politically." More than 500 attendees heard presentations from prominent elected officials, agency directors, pundits and scholars.

Roster member Maria McClurg's funeral Mass was held at the Holy Family Church in South Pasadena, followed by a Celebration of Life at the San Gabriel Country Club on March 1. McClurg's service was held almost one year after the passing of her late husband John's funeral Mass at the same location on March 24, 2023. These were beautiful and fitting tributes. Maria and John were good friends of and inspirational leaders to many Roster members, who worked with them over the decades at the LAC+USC Medical Center, Auditor-Controller and the Chief Administrative Office.

Historical note: The earliest luncheon meetings of Roster members were held at the San Antonio Winery, and convened by Harvey Kern, newsletter editor, Richard Marciniak, John McClurg, Frank Binch and yours truly in 1988. Currently, there are about 150 members on the Roster, which consists of active and retired managers from the County Departments of Health Services, Public Health and Mental Health.

For the 14th consecutive year, I am coaching a team of graduate students for the ACHE College Bowl Tournament in a case study competition with similar teams of Masters of Healthcare Management (MSHCM) students from 11 universities in California, including UCLA, USC, Cal State University campuses, and Loma Linda University. The teams present oral and written proposals on ways to improve an actual consortium of medical centers facing multiple challenges (financial, legal, market share, technological, environmental, accreditation, etc.).

The Judges are hospital administrators from the Southern California chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives. Cal State LA's team won first place in the competitions in 2023 and 2019, and placed among the top three universities in five of the last six years. Will the winning streak continue? Stay tuned for the results.

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RELAC NEWSLETTER

Vol 59 - May/June 2024

Number 3

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Office Hours

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Monday - Thursday

Closed Friday,

Saturday, Sunday &

Public Holidays



Inside LA County

by Judy Hammond
RELAC Member

West Covina hopes to form its own public health department by the end of the year, which would make it the fourth of the County's 88 cities to have its own department. The effort was begun in 2022 when councilmembers became upset with pandemic edicts by the County.

The County is considering creating a pilot program to provide shelter to elder abuse victims, noting that in 2021 there were 28,868 new elder abuse cases in the County, but no safe shelter facilities dedicated specifically for older adults. In fact, there is only one such facility west of the Mississippi and that's in Sacramento.

A shortage of functioning buses in the Sheriff's Department's transportation system has resulted in up to one-third of inmates not being able to get to their court appearances – contributing to the overcrowding of the jails.

Nearly 40 people received assistance in expunging their criminal records at the first two clinics cohosted by the Public Defender's Office and the County Library. More clinics are planned.

Former Undersheriff Tim Murakami, ordered by the court to testify about deputy gangs in the Sheriff's Department, acknowledged he had a Caveman tattoo while serving as a deputy at the East Los Angeles station in the 1980s but had it removed about five years ago due to the "negative media." He said he was aware of at least six tattooed groups, but disagreed with the characterization of them as being "deputy gangs," describing them instead as hard-working deputies with "station pride."

The District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation has provided security at the Board of Supervisors public meetings the past year, a service historically provided by the Sheriff's Department.

The County Office of Inspector General urged the Sheriff's Department to close its 83-person Risk Management Bureau, saying the unit is historically "flawed" and became "inappropriately aggressive" under former Sheriff Alex Villaneuva and has not improved under current Sheriff Robert Luna, including trying to silence whistleblowers. Luna called the report "speculative, unfair and irresponsible." He said since he took office in December 2022, the department had reported more than 3,600 instances of serious misconduct – including 128 allegations of deputy gang membership – to state authorities who oversee the certification and decertification of law enforcement officers.

The Animal Care and Control Department confiscated 143 animals from an illegal animal facility in Compton, and was successful in saving and medically treating a majority and putting them up for adoption. While most of the animals confiscated were dogs, there were cats, chickens, a rooster, tortoise, turtles, pigs, snakes, a horse, hamster, rabbits, a hawk, and lizards.

The County's 82 female firefighters will have an easier time performing their critical duties and with less risk of injury now that they will be wearing uniforms made to fit their bodies. Up until this time, they had been wearing uniforms made for men. The department had been unable to purchase the new uniforms previously because manufacturers required larger orders than needed for the small number of female firefighters. That changed after the all-female Board of Supervisors sent a letter to all the uniform companies urging them to provide the women firefighter uniforms in smaller batches. In the U.S., 95 percent of firefighters are men. In L.A. County, 3,063 of the 3,145 firefighters are male.

Thirteen people suspected of being members or associates of the Mexican Mafia prison gang were charged by the District Attorney's Office for their alleged roles in what authorities said was a narcotic smuggling operation and violent assault within the County jails. Several high-ranking associates of the Mexican Mafia from outside of the jail were accused of coordinating the operation under the authority of a Mexican Mafia member in state prison.

County food inspectors say high vacancy rates and mismanagement have led to rushed, subpar inspections. The Public Health Department is budgeted for 244 field inspectors but was struggling to fill 69 vacancies caused by an industry-wide lack of qualified applicants.

The District Attorney's Office has created an Interfaith Advisory Board, the sixth advisory board formed by DA George Gascón since he took office in December 2020. Gascón said the new board will advise his office on policies and practices that promote fairness, inclusivity, and cultural competency.

The union representing Los Angeles County prosecutors is suing District Attorney George Gascón, alleging his office has refused to turn over public records related to controversial hires of upper management and the removal of inmates from death row.

Love was in full bloom on Valentine's Day at the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's offices, which performed 177 marriage ceremonies.

Environmental advocates are suing Metro for approving planning documents for a 1.2-mile aerial gondola from Union Station to Dodger Stadium, saying the project would impact the land and airspace of Los Angeles State Historic Park, destroy more than 250 trees, displace wildlife and permanently ruin its vista.

The Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk has a new 144,000-square-foot state-of-the-art ballot processing center in Industry that consolidates the processing, verifying, and counting of all cast ballots in the county.

The cost of the County's settlements and judgments between July 1, 2022 and July 1, 2023 was \$257 million, three times higher than the previous fiscal year. The Sheriff's Department accounted for \$150 million of this, about double the year before. The amount spent on overall claims, including workers compensation cases and related legal costs, was more than \$982 million, up 25 percent.

One \$2.7 million settlement in a recent case, filed by "Jane Doe, et al.," alleged two applicants for intern positions with the Department of Children and Family Services were subjected to disability discrimination and failure to accommodate. In another new case, two men wrongly convicted and imprisoned for 17 years are suing the County, claiming three sheriff's detectives fabricated reports, hid exculpatory evidence and intimidated witnesses from telling the truth.

Dr. Louis Kwong, who had been on paid leave since 2022 during an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct while orthopedics chief at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, is no longer working at the hospital, but Health Services Department officials would not say whether he resigned or was fired. Two lawsuits regarding Kwong were filed in October 2023 by three Harbor employees who allege retaliation, hostile work environment, harassment and gender and pregnancy discrimination.

Former Chief Probation Officer Adolfo Gonzales has filed a whistleblower lawsuit against the County, saying he was fired in March 2023 for reporting critical staffing shortages in the juvenile halls to state inspectors, which led to the closure of two of the facilities. The County's attorney, however, said Gonzales was fired because he did not provide the leadership needed for the department.

Nine months after the Probation Department closed the two juvenile halls and replaced it with another to satisfy state concerns, the Board of State and Community Corrections threatened to close that facility (Los Padrinos in Downey) as well, saying there had been little improvement, citing too few staffers on hand, not enough safety checks and too little programming. The state also said the Barry J. Nidorf

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RELAC Meeting continued from p.1



RELAC veterans, who served in various branches of the U.S. military, attend the General Membership meeting.

Brekki urged audience members to “share only general information on public social media, if at all, and use a fictitious persona for non-legal, financial, governmental and other websites where real identity does not matter.”

The segment on using ATM and credit cards cautioned members to “look out for card scammers. Use contactless features, if possible, rather than inserting or swiping the card,” Brekki said. “Swiping is most risky. Use the gas pump or register facing the clerk, and use your hand to cover PIN entry”, he said. “Be aware of people looking over your shoulder in public places, and educate yourself about Artificial Intelligence ‘deep fakes’”, added the former rocket scientist for NASA.

Brekki’s nearly one hour presentation was well-received and although there was much more to discuss, the good news is the comprehensive, one-page handout is posted to the RELAC website, www.relac.org. Brekki may be able to provide an update at RELAC’s September General Membership meeting. A location will be provided in the next newsletter.



The well-attended gathering opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Rick Taira, U.S. Army veteran who retired from the County Department of Mental Health. RELAC Vice President Linda Hopkins gave an update on RELAC Connections, and attendees generously made on-the-spot donations to the March of Dimes and the L.A. Regional Food Bank. (Details on these fundraising efforts are available in the RELAC Connections article on Page 4.)

RELAC long-standing vendors Tamra Smalewitz, Southland Credit Union, and Victor Tafolla, LACERA, provided information on services available to retirees. They also participated in opportunity drawings where retirees won gift cards to local retail establishments.

The meeting was held in the East Wing Activity Center of the Carson Community Center in Carson, CA.



Hopkins welcomes potential RELAC volunteers to meeting

Inside LA County continued from p.6

Secure Youth Treatment Facility in Sylmar – which houses about 50 youth already sentenced and returned to the County’s custody following the dissolution of the state Department of Juvenile Justice in 2021 – was “unsuitable” to continue housing youths.

Increasing the staffing level is a challenge. Not unlike other law enforcement agencies nationwide, the Probation Department is experiencing a decline in those who want to be probation officers and an increase in those retiring early or resigning. In addition, staff call-outs and medical leaves are a problem. The department said recently that about 1,400 employees (a third of the total) were on leave and that it had taken more than 500 disciplinary actions since October 2022 against employees who called out excessively or did not show up for work.

The department recently reassigned a number of high-level supervisors to work at Los Padrinos due to “high levels of youth-on-youth violence, assaults on officers, widespread apathy among

officers.” And it has transferred 250 field officers from the adult probation program to Los Padrinos and Nidorf, which critics say will potentially leave thousands of probationers without proper supervision.

Understandably, County supervisors are not happy. Supervisor Chair Lindsey Horvath said the situation “illustrates exactly why we must dismantle our system of youth justice entirely and build out the care-first vision that our young people need and deserve. But, so long as we have a department culture that perpetuates a broken system and state laws that uphold the status quo, this nightmare will continue.” Supervisor Janice Hahn was equally critical. “Multiple probation chiefs have been unable to fix the problems facing the department. I am concerned about the future of the Probation Department and whether they are capable of the reform that we all know needs to happen.”

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

February 2024

Assessor - Robert Golisch, Edwin Hadnott, Elisa Jorquez, Ricky King
Auditor-Controller - Carl Fish
Chief Administrative Office - Rhonda Albey
Chief Executive Office - Lena Jones-Perez
Child Support Services - Maria Gonzalez, Lawrence Hill, Alma Hudson, Michelle Wyrick
Children & Family Services - Peter Daley, Lorena Garcia, Cheryl Gilcrest, Janice Heather, Sharinna Johnson-Mitchell, Travis Kelly, Mary Paulette Medina, Becky Merriweather, Cristina Morales, Nayat Mutafyan
County Counsel - Melodie Larsen
District Attorney - Andy Le
Environmental Health - Henry Levin
Fire - John Garrisi, Charolette Graham, Chinwen Hang, Larry Hoerner, Sanford Hofmann, Eleanore Kruggel, Linda Loudon, James Makuta, Alfred E. Martinez, Michael McIlroy
Harbor-UCLA Medical Center - Marylou Custodid, Martha Hampton, Nancy Johnson, Martha C. Magee
Health Services - Merlin Gaor, Martha Gomez, Herlinda Gonzales, Sandra Gradt, Debra Haynes, Mellie Herrera, Rosanna Howard, Sheri Howard, Delia Intia, Ellen Jimenez, Hildreth Kent, Vivian Knight, Veronica Lewis-Houston, Henry J. Lin, Aurora Litam, Margarita Logan, Michael H. Manning, Carmen Marquez, Buddy Meijer, Tim Mellin, Cynthia Molina, Alonzo Moriel, Melneze Morse, William Stringer, Rachel Wilson
Internal Services - Teresa Lin, Richard Martinez
King-Drew Medical Center - Lujana Gresham (Scott), Young-Soon Kang, Milton Russell, Milagrose Washington
LAC+USC Medical Center - Melvin Hasseler, Gloria Henry, Miranda Hoh, Myra L. Hutchins, Corazon Jardenil, Myung-Sun Lee, Arlene Lovejoy Bluem, Claudia Macias, Jose Manzanal
Mental Health - Nathaniel Hemedesh, Tzuoh Hsu, Gregory Lecklitner, Ching Tang Liu
Olive View-UCLA Medical Center - Tony Taheri
Parks and Recreation - George Guy, Antonio Martinez
Probation - Martina Herrera, Thomas Jackson, Gail Joslin, Esther Lawrence, Anthony Lerma, Linton Morgan
Public Defender - Andrea Gilliam
Public Health - Mary Hwang, Kathy Iverson, Sandra Kim, Debra Mendoza, Olga Murga-Rodriguez
Public Library - Pamela Hall
Public Social Services - Dejene Gashe, Alan Gillette, Payton Grogin, Juan Gutierrez, Shirley L. Hansen, Shakeh Hovsepien, Maxine Jefferson, Neena Sohini Jerome, Gary Lacore, Maria Lacore, Albert Lapenson, Loc Ly, Que Ly, Karla Lynch, Max Madrid, Tiruhi Manukyan, Gerardo F Marquez Jr., Janet E. Metters
Public Works - Rose Glenn, Judy Garrett-Hays, Juanita L. Goins, Fred Guido
Rancho Los Amigos Hospital - Brenda Lee, Mary Jason
Sheriff - Jesse Garner, David Gomez, Janice Grigsby, Dawn Harrison, Gloria V. Herrera, Michael Hersh, James Higgins, Booker Hollis, Betty Ann Holmes, John Huerta, La Forrest Jackson, Carondelette Jenkins, Eugene Liu, Theresa Lung, Sandra Maloney, Frederick Marasigan, George Martinez, Todd Megerle, Ruben Mendoza, Douglas Miller, Gerald Jay Mitchell, Larry Moon, Carmen Morales, Cecilia Munson
Superior Court - Larry Francois, Vijaya Lark, Leopie Lee, Teresa Luna, Allyn Mattox, Mary E. Morahan, Janet Moxham, Shirley Douglass Tyler, Ryan Keith
Workforce Dev. Aging & Comm. Svc. - Jay Jonathan Glassman
Associate Members - Laili Agus-Glassman, Paul Balickian, Karl R. Blasius, Richard Blum, Jean Burke-Martinez, Kenneth Chan, Suwana Chotisorauth, Debra P. Daley, Francine Francois, Lupe Garcia, Nelson Garcia, Doris Garner, Jeffrey D. Gilliam, Angie Gomez, George H. Gradt, Meg Grant, Theresa Grasso, Suhizin Gutierrez, Michelle Hasseler, Arlene Higgins, Bettie Hill, Cecelia Hoerner, Lori Gail Hofmann, Kevin J. Hotchkiss, Su-Cheng Hsu, Charles E. Hudson, Corrine Huerta, David Hwang, Patricia Jackson, René A. Jimenez, Asegedech Kedu, Chung Kim, Laura King, Clifton Knight II, Oy-Ying Kwong, Charlesetta Lampkins, Odean P. Lawrence, Ingrid Liu Lin, Cecil Litam, Chen Yu Liu, John Logan, Daniel Maloney, Bridget Marasigan, Aris Mardirosian, Gillie S. Martinez Mikkelsen, Irma Martinez, Victoria Martinez, Andrea McIlroy, Anthony Ray Medina Sr., Rebecca Megerle, Inge R. Meijer, Lorraine Mendoza, Mary Esther Mitchell, Michael H. Mitchell, Mark Molina, Delores L. Moon, Sonia Morgan, Robert Pennington, Joseph Perez, Arthur E. Richardson, Bernardo Rodriguez, Eugene Washington

Thanks for Referrals

Our thanks to the members shown in bold, for referring new members, shown in italics.

February & March 2024

Barry Hunt, *Rhonda Albey*, Chief Executive Office, formerly Chief Administrative Office

Mercell Manuel, *Janice Grigsby*, Sheriff
Jeff Phillips, *William Stringer*, Health Services

Wanda D. Grant, *Shirley Douglass Tyler*, Los Angeles Superior Court



Happy Birthday, RELAC Centenarians

May

Lorraine Dunning, 100, Harbor General Medical Ctr.
Eleanor Henley, 100, Road Department
Lois S. Yagi, 101, Public Works

June

Anderson Johnson, 110, Sheriff
Marquita Tabag, 100, LAC+USC Medical Center

President's Message continued from p. 1

Finally, as stated many times, I am open to receive your ideas or suggestions to improve RELAC. This is your organization too, so please do not hesitate to share them with me or any RELAC Board member.

DHS Managers continued from p. 5

On Saint Patrick's Day my brother, Dorian, and I attended a virtual family reunion with a friend's relatives from Ireland and the USA. We shared memories and ended this trans-Atlantic fest with a rousing sing-along of a classic song.

LACERA continued from p. 2

Finally, I want to convey our sincere appreciation for your contributions to Los Angeles County. Enjoy the summer months and stay healthy.

Board of Investments continued from p. 2

losses. For example, investments in the stock market typically carry high-level risks but they also offer high returns over time. Assets such as cash are invested in certificates of deposit the provide a fixed interest rate, and act as a buffer against losses incurred in the stock market.

In short, LACERA skillfully manages your contributions, investing them in a responsible way to ensure long-term benefits. Stay tuned for more updates on BOI activities.



PASSAGES

Compiled by Judy Hammond,
RELAC Member



McClurg



Disco



Skaist



Dunn



Shapiro

DEATHS:

Clare Kjolsrud, 81, who licensed and supervised staff for foster family and day care homes, retiring in 1992 after 26 years of County service. **Maria Elena McClurg**, 78, who was associate administrator of Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center in Downey when she retired; from complications of leukemia. Dr. **Leonard B. Skaist**, 92, who served as chief of pediatric urology at County+USC Medical Center. **James Randall Dunn**, 86, deputy district attorney from 1967-69 who served as head of the federal public defender's office from 1976-84 and was appointed to the L.A. Superior Court in 1999 by Gov. Pete Wilson; from complications following a stroke. **Dan Mikesell**, a deputy county counsel who was serving in the Public Services Division when he retired. **Norman J. Shapiro**, 80, who served 25 years in the District Attorney's Office before being appointed a Superior Court judge in 1995 by then-Gov. Pete Wilson, retiring 27 years later. Firefighter **Jonathan Van Oeffelen**, assigned to Fire Station 52 in Vernon, died while on duty. **David Raymond Disco**, 81, who retired at age 57 in 1999 after 31 years in the District Attorney's Office, where he headed the child support and appellate divisions and several branch offices. Former Sheriff's Inspector (Commander) **Davidson Turner**, 102, who retired in 1978 after 30 years of service. Deputy **Daniel Okamoto**, who joined the Sheriff's Department in 2017, killed in an off-duty traffic collision on April 12. **Gail N. Tierney**, 76, who retired in 2011 after serving 31 years as a senior deputy to both Supervisor Deane Dana and Supervisor Don Knabe, from complications of dementia. **Betty J. Reddin**, a former member of the board of trustees of the Natural History Museum, who founded the Dinosaur Ball, an annual gala that continues today. She was preceded in death by her husband, former L.A. City Police Chief Thomas Reddin. **Ronald James Arnault**, who as former chair of the Music Center played a significant role in the completion of the Disney Concert Hall.



Kjolsrud



Perez



Van Oeffelen



Pryor



Okamoto



Tierney



Turner

RETIREMENTS:

Will Pryor, a Fire Department battalion chief and long-time trustee on both the LACERA Board of Investments and Board of Retirement, with 34 1/2 years of service. **Sylvia Contreras**, information systems supervisor in the Department of Human Resources, with 43 years of service. **Kimberly Howard**, a principal analyst in the Department of Human Resources, with more than 40 years of service. **Jean Guccione**, who was communication director for former District Attorney Jackie Lacey, moving to the Public Health Department following the election of George Gascón, with almost 17 years of service. **Laura Perez**, program manager for the Quality and Productivity Commission under the Board of Supervisors, with more than 42 years of County service. Principal Deputy County Counsel **Richard Brouwer**, who was served in the Labor and Employment Division, with more than 29 years of service. Principal Deputy County Counsel **Leslie Smith**, Probate Division, with more than 26 years of service. **Barbara Holmes**, a senior secretary V in the County Counsel's Office, with 33 years of service

HONORS:

The East LA Civic Center Metro Station dedicated in honor of former Supervisor **Gloria Molina**, who led the effort to extend the Gold Line to the Eastside.

ELECTIONS:

Supervisors **Kathryn Barger**, **Janice Hahn** and **Holly Mitchell** reelected; this will be Barger's and Hahn's last four years in office due to term limits. Former Sheriff **Alex Villanueva**, who challenged Hahn, came in second in the three-person race, garnering 28.1 percent of the vote compared to Hahn's 57.8. District Attorney **George Gascón** captured only half of the 50 percent of votes he needed to win election in the March primary. He now faces defense attorney and former federal prosecutor **Nathan Hochman**, who got 15.9 percent of the votes, in November general election. **Anthony (Tony) Bell**, who was assistant chief deputy and communications director to former County Supervisor Mike Antonovich, elected to Republican County Central Committee, 44th Assembly District.

COURTS:

Department of Mental Health psychologist **Sara Hough** received \$1.65 million to settle her 2018 lawsuit against the County in which she claimed she was subjected to discrimination, harassment and retaliation for her reports of alleged inmate maltreatment and due process violations at Twin Towers by the Sheriff's Department. Former Sheriff's Deputy **Kevin Honess** was found not guilty of perjury for his 2019 testimony that he recovered a stolen gun from the front seat of a car; the District Attorney's Office had said a video showed another deputy had found the gun inside a bag in the trunk. Probation Officer **Rafaela Martinez** charged with having sex with a male inmate at Dorothy Kirby Center, bringing contraband into a jail, and arranging to meet a minor for lewd purposes.

IN MEMORIAM

This list includes retired employees, both RELAC members and non-members.

Agricultural Comm./Wts. & Meas. - Leland J. Anderson, David M. Brackin, Dennis C. Kaiser

Aids Program - Jonathan Saffold

Alcohol/Drug Pgms. Admin. - Barbara J. Reece

Ambulatory Care Network - Marsha Wehr

Animal Control - Mary P. Grady

Antelope Valley Rehab. Center - Annie L. Carey

Assessor - Tony A. Contreras, Mary Lee Flannery, Eddie L. Richardson, Lennister K. Williams

Auditor-Controller - Gary A. Parsons

Beaches & Harbors - Richard L. Garrett, D. W. Schumaker

Board of Supervisors - Nancy Aspaturian

California Children's Services - Marion L. Schramm, Gregory Yau-Yen Wong

Chief Executive Office - Leno Frank Burks

Chief Information Office - James R. King, Reginald Marable

Child Support Services - Gloria J. Anderson, Vidella B. Cordero, Melba G. Knight, Daniel P. Lopez, Frances C. Magdaleno, Hatsuye K. Sakaguchi, King Uy N. Sare

Children & Family Services - Agustin J. Acevedo, Sharnette Anders, Ruth I. Bradley, Kay L. Bressler, Robbie L. Caldwell, Antonio Ceron, Carmela F. Chaney, Lori J. Chin, Virginia G. Diaz, Kevin Donnelley, Heidi G. Dorn, Marilyn Drury, Quinton L. Duke, Karen Marie Ellsworth, Sharon K. Evans, Mary Lou Flores, Bernadette Graves, Roberta J. Hawkins, Gilda G. Hemstreet, Walter R. Howell Jr., Kim-Nga T. Huynh, Regina Irving-Singleton, Joan A. Jager, Chung J. Kim, Madhuri Kumbhojkar, Kimberly Lee, Marina E. Miller, Linda Gail Murray, Albert C. Odell, Louise Phillips, Kathleen A. Reyes, Sheryl Richardson, Ronald W. Sherlock, Florence F. Sueyoshi, Edgardo Tayag, Lola Mae Vander Mei, Victoria Lee Vega, Bernice Ward, Leontyne Young

County Counsel - Jo Ann Faye Francis, Ronald L. Schneider

District Attorney - Anthony L. Ayala, Glenn R. Britton, David R. Disco, Joyce C. Galyardt, Barbara J. Moore, Mary Noil, Paul W. Turley

Engineer Facilities - James A. Moody

Fire - Samuel Boucher, Richard A. Brady, Randall E. Brandon, Robert L. Burns, Patricia Cuevas, George H. Hershberger, Randall B. Lloy, Donald B. Murray, Richard Ernest Partida, Warren Rigby, Jackson T. Soffa, Randall L. Sparks, Debra L. Thomas, Carl Troyano, Jonathan E. Van Oeffelen, Gregory A. Vital, Roger B. Wilhelm

Harbor/UCLA Medical Center - Arnold S. Bayer, Ronald R. Brown, Joe Bailey Cathcart, Shirley A. Chumley, Kenneth R. Dillard, Rolando J. Florendo, Beatrice Guerrero, Giovanni S. Guion, Betty R. Hamlin, Joan L. Hansen, Mary Johnson, Patsy J. Perry, Maria Redero, Kathryn Rowley, Arthur Rubin, Teresita B. Saad, Dorothy L. Silva, Gaudelia O. Valencia, Grace Young

Health Services Administration - Carl Buck, Weldon L. Feezell, Betty W. Jewel, Vaclav Klement, Edmon F. Lapid, Melvin A. Lebeauf, Shintaro Matayoshi, Laura A. Rico, Rhoda M. Tar Bush, Joan M. Thompson

Human Resources - Phillip C. Thomas

Internal Services - Arthur R. Alva, Walter L. Binney, Robert L. Bly, Carl H. Boegemann, John Brumley, George H. Crum, Cleophus De Bose, Donna Maria Dean, Louis E. Harris, William G. Irving, Haskell E. Jackson, Charles C. King, Carlos F. Marquez, Jacqueline Nelson, Frank A. Rivera, Isagani V. Romana, Joseph J. Smilgis

Juvenile Court Health Services - Jane Parker

King-Drew Medical Center - Mellonise Hayes, Stephanie Hill, Lawrence Lyons, Aundria L. Martin, Obiora N. Nwobodo, Chalard Petcharat, Jonathan Wasserberger, Janice P. Williams

LAC+USC Medical Center - Ruby L. Brown, Andrea M. Burdette, Ramiro Carreon, Lydia B. Castro, Joanne A. Conner, Michael Sue Cronin, Debbera Culver, Charles W. Daniel Jr., Amparo De Castro, Cristina Y. Espino, Fern Giessman, Alfreda Harris, Lydia Kalemian, James R. Keane, Harris Luu, Nellie S. Martinez, Willie E. McCarty, Johnny Mitchell, Erlinda M. Movidia, Steven Earl Nichols, Benjamin A. Omaiye, Alma R. Oropeza, Olubunmi E. Oyenyeyin, Teresita V. Pacificar, Jose Perez, Michael J. Pogar, Jose M. Ramirez, Cynthia Richardson, Mary E. Romero, Joanne E. Shifflett, Denise K. Stipe, Anne Volmerange

Medical Examiner-Coroner - Richard E. Vick

Mental Health - Jocelyn Bragasin, Leo S. Carroll, Charlotte Carter, Sydney Chhabra, Alice F. Davis, Maria Linda Fazio, Paul Edward Gaines II, Adele M. Katz, John F. Leonard, Yoshihiro Matsushima, Carmelithyra Maxwell, Richard A. Miller, Laverne M. Mitchell, Paul A. O'Leary, Ada M. Ramos, Mike R. Renteria, Latrina Denise Shallowhorn, Marian A. Solomon, Michael G. Tiratira, Carla Vlick, Melanie Roberts Walker

Military & Veterans Affairs - James C. Scott

Museum of Art - Ernestine H. Wootton

Olive View/UCLA Medical Center - Isagani C. Abueg, Paula M. Ananian, Gurdev S. Arora, Margaret Ballin, Angela Boatwright, Sharon Corcoran, Shane E. Dodge, Bonnie A. Evans, Doris Jackson, Delorise A. Johnson, Helen C. Juarez, Peter W. Lau, Opal Lumsey, Vicki L. Marlette, Phyllis B. Miller, Jacqueline Van Sickle, Rene G. Vanegas

Parks and Recreation - James A. Burrell, Rafael Cano Jr., Thomas P. Engel, Leo Glover, Henry G. Hawkins, Gary A. Kossick, Marquis Meade, Jorge A. Mendoza, Ray Munguia, Donna L. Noriega, Huval Ross, Stephen Schudell, Herbert J. Terrell

Probation - Gregorio H. Avila, Gilbert Barnett, Dennis R. Chormicle, Michael L. Deason, Donald J. Denny, Salvatore A. Guillotte, Sandra E. Johnson, Kenneth H. Larson Jr., Frank J. McCormick, Edinboro A. Norrell, Sunday A. Nyenke, Terrence O'Hare, Richard H. Procello, Curtis Richardson, George L. Richardson, Edward Sosa, Ma-Corazon P. Tacud, Chauncey R. White, Antonia R. Yasso

Public Defender - Stuart Alan Chapman, Omer D. Havlovic, Deborah A. Kelly, Quentin E. King, Angeliq R. Lee, John M. Martinez, Miguel D. Mirano

Public Health - Vera Jean Bell, Hildean Downs, Glen Fujimoto, Olga O. Galvan, Elizabeth J. Guidali, Heather Hughes, Richard J. Lonas, Margarita Lopez, Luis L. Martinez, Charles Miller, Michael Rodriguez, Barbara Rolfe, Dreka V. Russ, Mary Sinanian

Public Library - Carolyn E. Reisinger

Public Safety - Manuel R. Olea

Public Social Services - Elena Calvo, Mike Cardenas, Cynthia Carreon, Raphael B. Castaneda, Armando Cerda, Suzanne L. Conklin, Elda De La Cal, Noi T. Dinh, Darla J. Dombrowski, Mary Evans, Gisela Fernandez, Felicia S. Fernando, Klara Gevorkian, Jackquell Gasper, Misti Cherie Gomez, Mary D. Gutierrez, Alice A. Guzman, Stella Guzman, Jozelle R. Hall, Jack Harmell, Wilma D. Hill, Geraldine Mercedes Hunt, Sheila K.J. Jernigan, Apo Jones, Alan Keith, Jack W. Lacy, Grace Liu, Joyce A. Lunsford, Julius C. Madkin Jr., Helen I. Martin, Reuben A. Martinez, Maria E. McClurg, Yolanda McGlory, Bessie Mosley, Martha Patterson, Eloise Perez, Arkadia Petrossian, Shirley Diane Price, Laura S. Schall, Darlene Shelby, Dorothy Shepherd, April F. Smith, Letha F. Smith, June Stein, Glendena V. Stephens, Cao Tan, John P. Thai, Janet Trotter, Agnes L. Webb, Janet M. Weiss, Giralda Yturalde

Public Works - Remy Carretero, Steve M. Dimmett, Joseph A. Gabriel Jr., George Hanno, Robert C. Jensen, Daniel M. Johnson, Roland L. Jones, Joe Morales, Donald F. Nichols, Curt O'Bryan, Alexander Vincent Paolone, Gregory C. Strickland, Julian C. Valdez, Luis M. Velarde, Elmer R. Vollnogle, Donald M. White

Rancho Los Amigos Hospital - Frances M. Canchola, Howard Crosslin, Lois D. Gourley, Bernice Gunderson, William M. McAfee, Linda J. Mermingez, Phyllis Ontkean, Marian L. Posey, Derwin D. Thomas, Frank Virgle, Maxine L. Williams

Reg.-Recorder/County Clerk - Doris Williams, Tyrone D. Wright

Regional Planning - William H. Miller

Sheriff - Bersabe M. Amador, Joseph Anthony Barbosa, Eric C. Betts, George E. Brackens, Tommy D. Clothier, Gary W. Dahl, Bela G. Danko, Arnold Davis, Clinton O. Dillon, Alberto M. Dominguez, Michael S. Earhart, James T. Elliston, Sheryl Lynne Endresen, Albino Garcia, Gary W. Gertig, Richard M. Geyer, Earl W. Gillette, Chompoo Gittisarn, Cenovio Gomez, Barbara J. Graham, Bruce V. Haar, Peggy Henderson, Lily A. Hernandez, William E. Higgins Jr., Annetta J. Hunt, James H. Jennings, Beverly J. Johnson, George Kachin, Stuart D. Katsh, Daniel P. Keller, Kent M. Kiyomura, Rebecca Lee, Ward T. Littlefield, Carol R. Long, James B. McGriff, Ronald D. Melton, Anthony S. Nigro, Randy D. Perry, Barry M. Poltorak, Doris F. Postelle, Robert C. Prody, Christine C. Ramsay, Otis W. Reedy, Dennis L. Ryzow, Fusako K. Sanborn, Thomas L. Skaggs, Kevin A. Swanson, Jill S. Terry, Bryan Trout, Davidson V. Turner

South Coast Air Quality Mgmt. - Ray O. Perez

Superior Court/County Clerk - Maria Luz C. Abad, Tamara A. Acuna, Thelma Ann Brancato, Richard D. Comess, Desirea L. Crenshaw, Lizette Cruz, Irene S. Fujikawa, Fredessa D. Gresham, Cecil G. Knickerbocker, Judith A. Payn, Sandra L. Rodarte, Dan A. Sniderman, Lucy M. Varela, Velia M. Watkins, Chelsea D. Williams

Treasurer/Tax Collector - Gwendolyn Jenkins, Renee C. Owens, R. Elena Villacres Torres

Whittier Municipal Court - Larry S. Knupp

Women's Hospital - Daniel M. Segovia

Workforce Dev. Aging & Comm. Svc. - Hisa Sakiyama

Unidentified County Agency - Paul Lucas

Board of Retirement continued from p. 2

have been good and some not so good. I lived through the year 2000 pension enhancements that nearly broke some pension systems, and I also experienced the mortgage meltdown of 2008 when all of the pension systems in California struggled just to make payroll each month.

LACERA, of all of the public funds that I know of, weathered these battles perhaps better than any other public fund. We didn't grant the retroactive pension enhancements, and our somewhat conservative investment policies protected us when the markets crashed. In spite of all of that we managed to do very well with our overall investment strategies and remained amongst the best producers when it came to our total fund returns.

Many cities and counties throughout the State of California, because of their respective investment practices and philosophies actually experienced lay-offs and serious cuts in services, but none of that happened in the County of Los Angeles.

I am proud to say that our philosophy, investment policies, and fiduciary and plenary authority practices are some of the main reasons why we enjoy, today, one of the healthiest public pension funds in America. As L.A. County retirees we are truly lucky that we are members of LACERA.

Letters To The Editor *Write On!*

Dear RELAC Team, Happy Spring 2024! Thank you for all you do. District Attorney's Office Retiree, Child Support Division.

Delia L. Peña
Los Angeles, California

To All RELAC Personnel, sometimes we are too busy to thank the people that are so very important for our well-being. With lots of appreciation. Thank you.

Sofia Willisie
Long Beach, California

To Retired Employees of Los Angeles County, I received a General Membership Meeting notice to be held on 3-28-24, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Carson Event Center, East Wing Activity Room, 801 East Carson Street, Carson, California 90845. I will not be able to attend this special meeting. I am concerned about practical [ways] to protect my money, communicate, and protect myself from hackers and scammers. Please investigate and inform. Thank you.

Matthews Minor, Jr.
Inglewood, California

Dear RELAC, I am John Y. Gee, retired in 1998. I have had the attached membership card for over 23 years. I am requesting a replacement to be sent to me. By the way, I enjoyed your Carson California meeting today even though the food ran out and we had to wait for chairs. Hope to see more of these meetings in the future. RELAC is a great organization. Thank you one and all for your devotion and hard work.

John Y. Gee
Laguna Hills, California

LACAAEA Honors Lisa Garrett

by Jason H. Williams,
RELAC member

Attorney Lisa Garrett, who has served as Los Angeles County's Director of Personnel since March of 2010, was honored by LACAAEA (Los Angeles County African American Employees Association) during its annual celebration of Black History Month, held February 23, 2024 at the Omni Resort and Hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

Ms. Garrett was recognized for outstanding achievement as the Director of the Department of Human Resources (DHR), being a role model for women of color in County government, and for supporting LACAAEA's mission to serve and promote the professional development of African American employees.

"African Americans and the Arts" was the theme of the fundraising event, and the keynote speaker was Kristin Sakoda, Director of the County's Department of Arts and Culture. Ms. Sakoda, a Stanford University alumna and graduate of New York University's Law School, formerly led the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

More than 300 attendees, including distinguished past honorees Supervisor Holly Mitchell and CEO Fesia Davenport, took time out of their busy schedules to honor Ms. Garrett. Also attending the gala event were Anna Mouradian, Chief Deputy for Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Edward Grice, executive director of the Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation, and Epifanio Peinado, former Chief Deputy of DHR.

A highlight of the program was the inspiring performance of "Great is Thy Faithfulness" by Ms. Garrett's son, Taylor Nevels. It was a family affair with Keith Nevels, her husband, joining in the celebration.

The LACAAEA's Social Impact and Community Support Committee, chaired by Armetha Bravo and co-chair Charmaine Dorsey, organized the annual dinner. Awards also were presented to Brandi Williams-Murdock, Justen Leroy, Antoine Gerard and the Amazing Grace Conservatory.





**RETIRED EMPLOYEES
of LOS ANGELES COUNTY**
1000 South Fremont Ave. Unit 15
Alhambra, CA 91803-8802

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PASADENA, CA

Military & Veterans Dept. Addresses Homelessness

Last year, nearly 1,800 homeless veterans were taken off the streets of Los Angeles County and placed in permanent housing. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) has created a Homeless Services Division to enhance its One Team's efforts to continue serving the unhoused, who have served in various branches of the U.S. Military.

The Board of Supervisors recently allocated \$1.9 million in Measure H funds for MVA to launch the new division. Measure H was approved by voters in 2017 as a 10-year revenue stream to prevent homelessness.

"Los Angeles County is addressing our homelessness crisis with urgency, including offering targeted services to our veteran community," said Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath, Third District, and Chair of the Board of Supervisors.

Darick Blackshere of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority will be the keynote speaker at RELAC's September General Membership meeting. Details will be in the July-August newsletter.

Reservation Form



2024 Annual Recognition Luncheon Thursday, June 6, 2024

Almanson Court
700 Almanson St., Alhambra, CA 91801

RELAC Member _____

Spouse/Guest Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Chicken Dijon Lunch # _____ @ \$36. ea Total \$ _____

Vegetarian Penne Pasta # _____ @ \$36. ea Total \$ _____

Make check payable to RELAC and mail to: RELAC 1000 Fremont Ave., Unit 15, Alhambra, CA 91803-8802

Confirmation and payment deadline: Monday May 27, 2024

IMPORTANT!
*Are you moving?
Did you change your
name, address or
e-mail address?*

Cut out the address portion of this newsletter, correct it and mail or e-mail/scan to:

RELAC
1000 S. Fremont Ave.,
Unit 15 Alhambra, CA
91803-8802 or
Phone:
(800) 537-3522
(626) 308-0532
Fax: (626) 308-2901

e-mail:
admin@relac.org
website:
www.relac.org

Note: It is important that you mail, e-mail or scan your new contact info to RELAC or contact RELAC by phone as we DO NOT receive your address change from LACERA.