



64 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

Sept/Oct 2022 Vol 57-5

President's Message

by Brian Berger

As of this writing, RELAC is still scheduled to host its Annual Recognition Luncheon on Aug. 10 at Almanson Court in Alhambra. We have already received a large number of confirmations, have a great program scheduled, materials collected and set for distribution, and are looking forward to this first face-to-face larger gathering in a long time. But even as I write this, there are still outside influences putting the actual luncheon in jeopardy. Fortunately, as of July 29, the County decided not to re-impose the face mask mandate restrictions, so as of when I write this note, we are still set to go... We hope to see many of you once again.

The RELAC Board of Directors has a new member, Nora Jackson. Nora was unanimously approved by the Board in July and assumed one of the two vacant positions. We are all excited to have her energy and background as a part our team. You can read more about her in this edition of our newsletter. The RELAC office has also hired a new staff person, Toni Simmons, to help with the growing workload. She has a very good background with the County, is already deep into so many of the office responsibilities, and has probably helped answer questions from a number of you already. She will also be helping at the Aug. 10 gathering.

Finally, take a few moments to go through the newsletter. There is a lot going on both at RELAC and LACERA and within the County. You also can access our website, which a growing number of you are becoming quite adept at using. Some of you have asked if there is a way you might more actively help, short of being an actual Board member, and in a growing number of situations their names have been happily added to various committees where their help, background and knowledge are much appreciated.

Please continue to take care of yourselves and be cautious in these times.

Feel free to call or write if you have any questions, idea, or suggestions for programs or changes.



Jackson Appointed to Board

Nora Jackson, senior quality assurance auditor for the Los Angeles County Retirement Association (LACERA) when she retired in 2019, has been appointed to RELAC's Board of Directors.

Appointed July 12 by unanimous vote of the RELAC Board of Directors, Jackson fills a vacancy created by the 2021 resignation of Joseph Kelly. Her term expires Dec. 31; however, she will continue to serve as a Board member in January as she was the only candidate for the seat in the current election, thus automatically elected.

Dave Muir, chair of the Bylaws, Nominations and Elections Committee, recommended that the Board appoint Jackson to the vacant seat instead of waiting for her term to begin in January. "That way, the Board could immediately gain the benefits of having Ms. Jackson on the Board," he said.

RELAC President Brian Berger said Jackson will be a great asset to the organization. "From the first interview, I was so impressed with Nora's energy, background, and personality that I could easily see how much she would help the activities of RELAC as a member of our Board."

Jackson worked for the County for more than 40 years, beginning her career as a student worker with the Sheriff's Department. She served as a data entry operator/data control clerk with the Auditor-Controller's Office, eligibility worker with the Department of Public Social Services, and from 1998 to 2006 as a senior retirement specialist supervisor for LACERA prior to being promoted to the quality assurance auditor position.

After working at LACERA for 21 years assisting retirees, Jackson said, she wanted to become a member of the RELAC Board so she could continue serving retirees with their benefit and pension concerns.

Jackson has been active in Toastmasters International since 2001, including serving as president, vice president of education and vice president of membership. She was named Toastmaster of the Year while serving as president.

A Fontana resident since 1994, Jackson has a son, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. "I always say I have two sets of grandchildren because the oldest three are adults now. The second set ages are 13, 7 and 2 years old."

She spends a lot of time visiting the younger children in Las Vegas, where they have been living for eight years, as well as her siblings and their extended family in Houston, Texas.



RELAC Seeks to Join LACERA in Suit Against County

By Judy Hammond, Newsletter Editor

The RELAC Board of Directors has voted to file an amicus brief in support of the Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association (LACERA) in its lawsuit against the Board of Supervisors to affirm its independence.

The Board has retained Michael Conger to handle the filing. Conger, well known among attorneys engaged in pension litigation in California, typically represents members who have claims against their retirement system.

"Mr. Conger's expertise in the field of public pensions, including the California County Employees Retirement Law applicable to our system, makes him an ideal attorney to represent us in this matter," said RELAC Director Dave Muir, who recommended his retention.

continued on p.3

News From LACERA

by JJ Popowich

Assistant Executive Officer



Before I get into what's going on with LACERA, I'd like to take a moment and share that I am writing this article while working remotely and recovering from COVID. Fortunately, it has been a mild case so far, with flu-like symptoms and fatigue. I share this with you as a public service announcement to remind you that the COVID pandemic is not over. I urge all of you to continue to take care of yourselves -- get your vaccinations and boosters, and take all recommended precautions. In our case (my whole family has it now) we know where we got it, and it was the result of being around someone who knew they were sick but didn't disclose it. So be careful out there and please take care of yourself, family, and friends.

We've had a very busy few months at LACERA, as we are well into our strategic planning process and have been working hard to improve our processes and, most importantly, service to you. Here are some updates.

Service and Operations: The latest COVID BA.4 and BA.5 variant waves rained on LACERA's parade this summer, too. In mid-July, L.A. County reached a transmission level that triggered LACERA's emergency telework procedures. These changes have very little impact on our ability to provide service, except for transitioning in-person appointments to virtual appointments in our Member Service Center. We expect this situation will be short-lived and are carefully monitoring the County data so that we can bring remote staff back to the office using our successful hybrid schedule when the transmission rates decline.

This leads me to the topic that is the driving force behind my work at LACERA: making sure that you are getting the service you deserve to fully understand and maximize your benefits. If you have needed assistance from LACERA recently and had to wait longer than you would have liked to speak with a retirement benefits specialist, please know that we hear you and are working hard to get you service faster. Let me outline what is going on.

Over the last five years, LACERA has seen a dramatic increase in the number of calls and members reaching out to our Member Services and Retiree Healthcare divisions for assistance. We have averaged over 16,000 calls per month (with over 21,000 calls in January alone) in the last six months, which represents a 50 percent increase over pre-pandemic levels and our highest volumes in the last two decades. These volumes are accompanied by an increase in call duration, due to higher numbers of retirement counseling calls and an overall greater variety of questions that members have about their pension and health care benefits. Add in internal staff promotions, recent retirements, and the challenge of recruiting and training new retirement benefits specialists (training alone takes 10 months) and you really have the perfect storm of factors causing this situation.

Since there are multiple factors at play, things will not be resolved overnight. However, we are taking immediate steps while planning for the longer term. Earlier this year we added an expected wait-time message when you select Member Services or Retiree Healthcare options when calling. We will soon be expanding this function to provide periodic updates on the wait time while waiting for a specialist. We are also working on a callback function that we expect to have in place within a few weeks of the time this article was written. Adding these functions is possible due to the technological upgrades we made when the pandemic hit, and they are just the start of the how we intend to use technology to make your life easier when working with LACERA. Increasingly, we will be analyzing data to address bottlenecks as well as identify common member questions so we can provide answers online and via informative videos.

On the staffing side, we're moving staff around within the organization on a short term basis to increase the number of calls we can handle. On the longer term side, we have hired and are training a new class of retirement benefits specialists, who will begin serving you as soon as October/November, and we have another class in the works. In addition, our Human Resources Division has expedited recruiting processes throughout LACERA to reduce the staff vacancy rate and ensure that divisions that support Member Services are operating at full capacity.

Staffing and technology are just two components of the solution. Every division at LACERA is streamlining how we process information, solve problems, and work together to improve efficiency. For example, we are currently exploring issuing debit cards to those members still receiving mailed payments to help improve delivery of their benefits and reduce the instances of lost or stolen checks. (Replacing checks is a labor-intensive process that requires coordination across multiple divisions.) We are also working hard to simplify our death benefit process to shorten our claim issuance timeline.

continued on next col.

LACERA continued

We have dozens of other projects in the pipeline to further build our infrastructure and provide self-service options for those who want them. Our goal is to provide you with service where, when, and how you want it!

In the meantime, a friendly reminder of some of the self-service transactions you can make quickly and easily (no call required!):

For specific, detailed retirement questions, send a secure message by logging into My LACERA via the lacera.com homepage (click the green button on the top right).

For account maintenance (address changes, direct deposit changes, tax elections) or to see your most recent automatic deposit receipt or print out a pension verification letter, log into My LACERA and it's all at your fingertips.

For general topic information, visit lacera.com. For general questions, e-mail us at welcome@lacera.com.

continued on p.3

Investment Board

by Joseph Kelly
LACERA Board of Investments
Trustee



At the July meeting, staff presented to the board an update on the internal management of public market assets. Historically, these assets have been managed by external partners. Several years ago, the board requested a detailed analysis of what it would take to manage these assets in-house and the associated costs. At the time, the feeling was that costs associated with internal management would be less than what the external partners charged. In the recent update, staff noted that the economics of internal management have changed. Over the last several years, they have been successful in reducing the costs of external management. Estimated costs of internal management have increased due to a number of factors, including higher personnel and information technology costs. Staff recommended this project be put on hold and the board concurred.

The board is finalizing plans for a strategic offsite in September. This would be the first time the board has come together since the beginning of the pandemic. I am keeping my fingers crossed that COVID positivity rates decline so that an in-person meeting can become a reality. It would be good to see each other again after so many months of virtual meetings.

Once again, LACERA investment staff were recognized for their aptitude. CIO (Chief Investment Officer) magazine annually publishes a list of rising stars. Quoc Nguyen, an investment officer on LACERA's Risk Mitigation and Credit team, is one of 16 investors featured in this year's list. His focus is on hedge funds and illiquid credit. Quoc has done an outstanding job helping build these programs that are designed to enhance the LACERA fund's performance in a variety of market environments. Congratulations, Quoc.

LACERA Pension Fund		May 2022	Total Assets: \$73.2 billion		
Returns	FYTD	3 year:	5 year:	10 year:	
	+ 3.9%	+ 11%	+ 9.1%	+ 9.3%	

Board of Retirement

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



As I sit down and write this article, fresh in my mind are the two retirees with whom I have been in contact during the past three days who are about to exceed the \$1 million lifetime cap on their Anthem Blue Cross II retiree health plans. Both are retirees of the Sheriff's Department and worked over 30 years with the County.

The elimination of this cap or the increase in the cap has been something that LACERA has been working on for the past 10 years or so. In the past five to six years our efforts have become much more intense as we see the costs of health care rise, more and more expensive life-saving pharmaceutical drugs come out, and more and more of our retirees accumulating more and more towards their lifetime max due in part to the fact that we are living longer.

I wish I had some good news to share on this issue, but our ongoing interaction with the Board of Supervisors continues to meet with either deaf ears or one mind-numbing roadblock after another. It is very evident to me that the willingness on the part of the County to find a workable solution to this problem is becoming more and more difficult.

LACERA staff, with the help of our consultants and actuaries, have worked diligently to put together as comprehensive a set of statistics and facts that we can. The County also uses its actuary to crunch numbers, but unfortunately the two actuaries seem to be far, far apart when it comes to the costs of raising the cap, or eliminating it all together. Much of what creates problems and issues are some of the assumptions that actuaries use when calculating long-term costs and, from I have seen of the assumptions being used by the County, these seem to be a huge part of the problem. Our LACERA consultants and actuaries do not agree at all with the assumptions that the County is using.

So where do we go from here, you may be asking. That's a good question, but a solution must be found. The County made a promise to active and retired members that the retiree health care program would be guaranteed and fully paid for under a formula that says that with 25 years of County service, your premiums would be fully covered. It certainly seems to me that if you are enrolled in a plan that has an unmovable cap (bear in mind that the ABC cap has been increased several times in the past) and that plan members exceed the plan cap and they lose their health insurance, the County of Los Angeles has NOT kept its commitment to keep the promised benefit available to that retiree.

One of the things that we do at LACERA is to work really hard to try to move retirees into an alternate plan in the event that they reach their lifetime maximum of \$1 million. The real problem lies when we have nowhere to move people because of where they live or they are NOT eligible for Medicare.

In closing, I want to remind everyone that the only plans that have the lifetime cap are the ABC Plans I, II, and Prudent Buyer. The firefighters have an Anthem Plan, but it has no lifetime cap. If you do not know where you are with respect to your lifetime usage with your Anthem Plan, you can call (800)284-1110 to get that information.

LACERA continued from p. 2

For forms, visit lacera.com and click on the Forms & Publications tile.

Strategic planning process: We are currently in the engagement stage, which hopefully you took part in! We sent a member survey to all members in July to get your input about how you want your LACERA benefits information and services delivered. As of Aug. 1, we have had over 10,000 responses, which we will be analyzing and incorporating into our strategic goals and action plans. Thank you for your feedback!

Since my last article, we have formed action planning teams (APTs), made of up key managers and staff members, and assigned one team to each of our seven strategic goals. As our boots on the ground, the APTs have been meeting regularly to take a deep dive into how we do things--identifying any processing bottlenecks, brainstorming ideas for improvement, and proposing solutions that will form the backbone of our action plans. The APTs will present their proposals to the strategic planning advisory team (dubbed the Spark Team) in September. After that, we will undertake the fourth and final stage of the process: completing the final version of the five-year strategic plan and action plans, which will be considered by the Board of Retirement with input from Board of Investments trustees, and starting implementation.

Well, that's it for this edition. I hope everyone is enjoying their retirement (you've earned it!), and I'll see you next time.

Suit Against County continued from p. 1

LACERA is seeking a court order to mandate that the Board of Supervisors comply with provisions in the California Constitution and the County Employees Retirement Law that require the Board of Supervisors to include in the County salary ordinance the employee positions and salaries that are approved by LACERA's Boards of Retirement and Investments.

The lawsuit was filed after the Board of Supervisors in 2021 rejected or modified personnel actions approved by LACERA's boards, including creating several new positions and changing the title and salaries of some existing positions.

The RELAC Board had previously voted to support the lawsuit, but requesting and being granted status as an amicus curiae ("friend of the court") allows RELAC the opportunity to file documents with the court in the case.

RELAC Director Bobbie Fesler, who worked in the County Counsel's Office before retiring, said a filing by RELAC could be helpful in getting the judge to rule in LACERA's (and, ultimately, RELAC members') favor. "A brief filed by RELAC on behalf of our members can reinforce to the court that this issue impacts 'real people.' It's not just a couple of governmental agencies squabbling in a power struggle," she said.

"Direct participation by RELAC in the argument can neutralize any attempt by the County to make this seem as though this is just a bureaucratic battle between LACERA and the Board of Supervisors," she said. "Our brief can emphasize why LACERA must have the authority to manage its own personnel decisions to fulfill its fiduciary duties to us, the retirees whose benefits are directly affected by having the right staff onboard to manage LACERA's assets and operations."

RELAC members are also urged to write letters to County supervisors to urge them to support LACERA's independence.

"This issue is a defining moment for LACERA, and there is no way we can carry out our fiduciary and plenary authority as trustees if the County is telling us what to do," said RELAC Director Les Robbins, who represents retirees on the LACERA's Board of Retirement.

Toni Simmons Joins RELAC Staff



Toni Simmons is the newest member of the RELAC office staff, serving as an assistant to office manager Sheila Simpson. Simmons was a County employee for 42½ years, working 38 years in the Department of Parks and Recreation as a senior secretary III and 4½ in the Sheriff's Department as a station clerk II. She retired in 2018. Simmons is the mother of two, Jr and Aisha, and has five grandchildren. "I am excited to be a part of the RELAC team and the new adventures it has in store," she said.

How Old is Your Pet, Really?

by Marcia Mayeda, Director
Department of Animal Care and Control



Some dogs and cats have lived remarkably long lives. In March, Guinness World Records named Chihuahua "TobyKeith" the oldest living dog at 21 years, 66 days old. The oldest dog ever recorded was an Australian Cattle Dog that passed in 1939 at the age of 29 years, five months. The world's oldest cat, Crème Puff, lived to be 38 years and three days.

TobyKeith was adopted as a puppy from an animal shelter in Florida. DACC is proud to report that one of its own alumni is right behind him in longevity. Lucky was adopted from DACC by former L.A. County employee Judy Hammond and her daughter Sara Conklin in 2001 as a puppy, making her 21 years old as well, and about five months younger than the record holder. Lucky is a cocker Spaniel/Chihuahua/miniature pinscher mix that has brought immense joy to her family, sharing her home lovingly with several cats and rabbits over the years. Perhaps these friendships contributed to her longevity. Certainly, the loving care she has received has made a great impact on her life span. Now, Lucky is experiencing the various impacts of old age on hearing, vision, and other physical issues but she is comfortable and receives special feedings and medicine to keep her going. As Judy remarked, "She is a member of the family and we love her dearly. Even through these hard times, she continues to bring us much joy and happiness. Every day spent with her is a blessing."

So, how old would Lucky be if she were a human? The old rule of thumb was seven dog years for every human year. However, science has shown us that this measure is no longer accurate. We now know more about dog genetics and aging as well as how the size of the dog plays a factor in longevity. For example, giant breed dogs mature more slowly than smaller ones during their first year, then age faster than smaller dogs in subsequent years. The old age guidelines don't take this into consideration. Additionally, cats age quite rapidly up until two years of age, then their aging process levels off at about four human years for every cat year. Size does not factor into cat aging. But they do get nine lives!

New age charts for dogs and cats have been created to better align their aging status with human years. While they don't go as high in years as Lucky, Crème Puff, and TobyKeith have achieved, they do show the nuances in dog and cat aging. You can view the dog and cat charts online on my blog at <https://animalcare.lacounty.gov/how-old-is-your-pet-really/>.

Every day we have with our pets is a gift, and we all want them to live their best and longest life possible. Their genetics and size will always be a factor in their lifespan. However, we can stack the deck in their favor by providing regular veterinary exams and treatments, good nutrition, regular exercise, a safe environment, and making sure they are spayed or neutered. Spaying and neutering prevent many types of cancers and make pets less likely to roam and become injured or prematurely killed. Microchips and pet identification tags help lost pets get home more quickly and safely.

I hope you and your pets have long, full lives of love and companionship.



Lucky with Kiki, whom she helped deliver and was a constant pal.



Roxy, the last of Lucky's "kitties," lying with Lucky, as she did all her life, even though both were ill. Roxy died not that much later.

In the last few months, Lucky wanted to be held when she was awake. Sara would hold her close to her heart, with new kitten Zoey close by. Zoey, a rescue kitty, not only was good with Lucky, but helped the family through the hard times, bringing some much-needed love and laughter.

She Was Lucky, But We Were Even Luckier

by Judy Hammond, Newsletter Editor

My daughter, Sara, begged to have a dog from the time she was a child. I always refused because I didn't want the mess and responsibility. But finally, when Sara was 17, I gave in after she tearfully explained how much she wanted a puppy, and how much it would mean to her to have something to love. It was one of the better decisions I have made. Little Lucky – whom we adopted from the L.A. County Animal Care and Control 21 years ago – has brought not only my daughter such joy, but to the family as well. I told Kaye Michelson of the department that we wanted a cocker Spaniel; it took several months, but she finally found us one – although you wouldn't know it by looking at her. Kaye assured that her mother was a cocker; the vet didn't believe it; he said she looked more like a mix of dachshund and mini pinscher. Recently we did a DNA test and it showed she definitely has cocker lineage. (She is 38.8% cocker Spaniel, 35.3% Chihuahua, 16% miniature pinscher, and 9.9% supermutt.) My daughter had a cat, Cali, and shortly after Lucky joined our household, Cali had kittens, two of whom we kept. Lucky helped "deliver" the kittens, barking at the door to alert us they had arrived and licking them clean (which she continued to do into their older years). Besides the three cats, our household would over the years also include two bunnies. Lucky loved them all, playing with them, sleeping with them, teasing them. But she was never around other dogs, so she never got to experience that bonding. We have always (halfway) kidded that Lucky thought she was a cat; as well as a "he" – she humped the cats and bunnies mercilessly. She was without question the leader of the pack.

We lost all three cats in the past couple of years; the last two (mother and daughter) within the last nine months, both at about 20 years old. Lucky never required any special care until the last year. Her high quality hard food with fresh cooked chicken was more than enough to keep her happy and healthy.

Sweet Lucky has lost her vision, hearing and ability to walk without assistance and is on seizure medicine, but she is a fighter and apparently not ready to go to doggy heaven yet. She needs support to eat and exercise – she wants to walk and will cry if you don't help her do so. When she isn't sleeping, she usually wants to be held like a baby. Sara works from home so is able to give Lucky the attention she needs. When I "babysit," I wrap Lucky in the soft baby blanket I bought when she was tiny, rock her and sing lullabies. She has been a fireball and to see her so helpless is heart-breaking. We have spent a small fortune on medicine, special diet food, and the veterinarian this past year, but as long as the veterinarian says she is not in pain, we remain committed to caring for her. Several people have suggested Lucky be put to sleep, but Sara says, "I'm not going to kill my dog." We just hope Lucky goes peacefully in her sleep and not get to the point that she is in so much pain that we may have to make that painful decision. She is a member of the family and we love her dearly. Even through these hard times, she continues to bring us much joy and happiness. Every day spent with her is a blessing.

Lucky turned 21 years old (120+ human years, according to her DNA results) in June and, based on the Guinness World Records, we believe she is the second oldest dog alive, only a few months younger than the Florida dog now holding the record. Our Lucky may be holding on to claim that record.

(Postscript: We lost our Lucky on July 25; it was very difficult for me, but Sara was/ is devastated. Although we knew it was coming, it didn't make it any easier. We lost our baby.)



What's Happening?

by Evelyn Gutierrez, Chair
Special Events Committee

The RELAC Board of Directors is pleased to inform you of the many special events and recreational opportunities available to our membership.

The following information on events or activities may provide you with safe and enjoyable outings. RELAC encourages you to remain safe and healthy. Face masks are currently optional, but remain a good option for individuals at risk.

Parks – Stay Cool

L.A. County Parks and Recreation Department invites you to “cool off” and have family fun at splash pads located in the following County parks: Alondra, Bassett, Magic Johnson, Pearblossom, Rimgrove, and Valleydale. FREE through Sept. 30. For additional information: visit parks.lacounty.gov.

Marina Movie Nights – Marina del Rey – FREE

Every Saturday night at 8 p.m. – Bring a picnic basket, a blanket or beach chair and watch a movie on a big screen under the stars. Arrive at 7 p.m. to pick out your spot on the lawn. Burton Chace Park, 13650 Mindanao Way, Marina del Rey. For additional information, call (424) 526-7777.

Sept. 3 – Iron Man (PG-13)

Sept. 10 – Encanto (PG)

Sept. 17 – Coco (PG)

Sept. 24 – The Wizard of Oz (PG)

The parking lots closest to Burton Chace Park are:

County Lot 77 – 13560 Mindanao Way

County Lot 4 – 13500 Mindanao Way

County Lot 5 – 4545 Admiralty Way

La Brea Tar Pits – FREE admission on Sept. 6 and Oct. 4.

L.A. County residents can also receive FREE admission daily from 3-5 p.m. 5801 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles. Call (213) 763-3499 for general information. Explore the saber toothed summer self-guided tour. Experience the amazing saber-toothed cat themed activities, including a stage show and 3D film screenings.

Marina del Rey BEACH EATS – Food Trucks

BEACH EATS is a Thursday weekly food truck event at the Marina's Mother's Beach from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. through Oct. 27. Located at Lot 11, 14101 Panay Way, visit the food trucks and enjoy the scenic Marina del Rey harbor. Leashed dogs are welcome. For current information, call (310) 306-9900.

Library Tool Lending Project

If you need tools for projects around the house, you can borrow power tools or gardening equipment for FREE if you contact the County libraries in Compton, Lancaster, Norwalk, Rosemead and San Fernando.

Items like hammers, wrenches, sewing machines, gardening tools and power tools are available for your use as a FREE service to library card holders. Contact lacounty-library.org for the tool list.

Fitness Centers Reopened

L.A. County senior centers or community centers have reopened fitness centers for a safe local exercise activity for seniors. Contact the following centers for information:

Altadena Senior Center (626) 798-0505

Antelope Valley Senior Center (661) 726-4400

Asian Senior Center, Gardena (310) 217-7300

East L.A. Senior Center (323) 260-2801

Florence Firestone Senior Center, Compton (323) 586-6502

Stay safe and socially connected. Share good times with fellow County retirees and create new memories.

Chinese American Veterans Awarded Medals

by Phillip Tuey Ow, RELAC
Member



Seventy years after World War II ended, the Chinese American World War II Veteran Congressional Gold Medal Act was passed in 2018, acknowledging the many injustices suffered by Chinese Americans. This legislation was achieved, in part, by the continued efforts of the Chinese American WWII Veterans Recognition Project and funding by the national Chinese American Citizen Alliance community involvement fund.

In accordance with the legislation, Public Law 115-337, the Congressional Gold Medal is awarded to designated veterans for their patriotism, sacrifice and courage in defense of the United States from Dec. 7, 1941 to Dec. 31, 1946.

Ow and wife



My father, Wing G. Ow -- along with 20,000 men and women who served in the armed services in WWII when the Chinese Exclusion Act was still in effect -- was prevented from obtaining U.S. citizenship. Of the Chinese Americans who served in WWII, 40% did not have U.S. citizenship. My father served in a cryptographic unit in

the China-Burma-India corridor. He deciphered enemy radio codes and translated instructions given to the Chinese Army. The cryptographic machine was used to send secured sensitive military intelligence to other military units. True to his quiet, steadfast and loyal nature, my father never disclosed much about his military service during his lifetime.

After two years of mounting paperwork processing and persistent correspondence during the pandemic and the unrelenting efforts of the Chinese American Citizen Alliance, my father received his Congressional Gold Medal posthumously. The event took place on May 21, 2022 in Westminster, California. Two other deceased Chinese American veterans were similarly honored. Their family members were also present to receive the medal on behalf of their late loved ones.

As the elder of my parent's children, I had the great and humbling privilege of being the designated recipient of the medal on behalf of my late father. On May 21, I was reminded of how proud my father was to see me receive the County Employee of the Month Award and scroll at a Board of Supervisors meeting in November 2004. I was just as proud that my father was finally recognized, along with his companions, for their heroic sacrifice and devotion to the United States, and in part as recognition for years of treatment as second class citizens.

The Congressional Gold Medal serves as an acknowledgement of the heroic efforts of all Chinese American veterans who served with loyalty, courage, distinction in the service of our country. Let us not forget their service and sacrifice for our country and for future generations.

continued on p.10

Letters To The Editor

Write On!

Thank you [for the copy of the July-August newsletter]. That's an impressive newsletter!

Greg Torres, L.A. County Professional Peace Officers Association

Dear President Berger and Board of Directors, we cannot thank you enough for the generous donation that you gave us for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Reunion in McArthur, California. We really appreciate you supporting this event. This was our 43rd year, and you have been so supportive throughout the years. We were impressed with 42 in attendance. We did have 21 cancellations due to gas prices and a few personal reasons, and one NO show!! Those of us who attended this reunion did have a great time! We had dinners together every night. Our deluxe pancake breakfast [was] on Thursday morning for everyone. Your support has truly helped us to continue this annual deputy sheriff's reunion, and we want to let you know how much we appreciate your continued support!!!! THANK YOU!! FROM ALL OF US!!

Norman and Chickee Nelson, Las Vegas, Nevada
On behalf of the attendees at the McArthur 43rd Reunion

Thank you so much for all your love and support. I really appreciate your generosity and thoughtfulness. Thank you for awarding me the RELAC scholarship this year. This opportunity will help me pay for UCSB in the fall. I am beyond excited to begin a new chapter in my life at the University of California, Santa Barbara!
Elliott Hull, Chico, California

I, of course, still read the RELAC newsletter; way more interesting than the LACERA newsletter. LOL. Now this may seem very, very petty to you and anyone involved in the "In Memoriam" segment of the newsletter. As you know, the CAO and the CEO are basically two different entities. I already told Brian [Berger], but when I kick the bucket, I want the newsletter to use CAO, not CEO. I told him I would come back and HAUNT RELAC. LOL. I NEVER worked for the CEO. I bring that up because a really good of mine, Bob Thompson, just passed away and they listed CEO. He NEVER worked for the CEO. He, as well as I, worked for the Chief Administrative Office (CAO). I know, it's not a big deal. It's just accurate.

Pat Guin, Phoenix, Arizona

(Ed. Note: We compile the "In Memoriam" from a death notification list produced by LACERA. We don't change anything, except in the case of certain department names that we standardize for newsletter purposes, like the hospitals. Some departments listed are now defunct, but we still include them as they were in existence when the person retired. Bob Thompson was a RELAC member and our database does list him as retiring from the CAO in 1992.)

Harry's [Hufford] article [in the July-August newsletter] was priceless! Many memories about working for Harry since he hired me right out of UCLA in 1970. We members are all so appreciative of your good work in providing us such a marvelous newsletter ... and for being a mensch, too!
Barrington (Barry) Hunt, Inglewood, California

Thanks again for featuring us in the newsletter. Since am friends with also featured Pam Everett and Kathy House, all the more meaningful. Appreciate your sending me the two extra copies! You are doing such a wonderful

job as newsletter editor. Keeps us all connected in our County family. Here's to a happy, healthy summer!
Linda Tarnoff, Newhall, California

A belated thanks for the extra copies of the RELAC newsletter! I sent it to my son. He's in Seattle doing an internship so he got a piece of home!
Marion Figueroa, Pasadena, California

The article by Evelyn Gutierrez in the May/June issue of the RELAC newsletter really captured the heart and soul of the late Howard Takata. He selflessly devoted his free time to advocate for the advancement of career opportunities and visibility of all minority groups working for the County, including the Asian American and Pacific Islander family. He wanted for all of us to stand up and be counted and have our voices heard. Howard's involvement with the Los Angeles County Asian American Employees Association (LACAAEA) was a testament to his commitment to opening doors for future generations. Recipients of the scholarship named in Howard's honor will give a graduating high schooler a leg up. Thank you, Ms. Gutierrez, for your wonderful acknowledgement of Howard Takata.

Catherine Mak, San Gabriel, California

Thank YOU [Judy Hammond] so very, very much [for doing an article on the passing of Dan Ikemoto]! I knew your writing skill would express Dan's inspiring legacy so very, very well! PERFECT!

Richard Dixon, Burbank, California

I was pleasantly surprised to receive a check from you as one of the winners in the RELAC 2022 Valentine Drawing. Thank you very much.

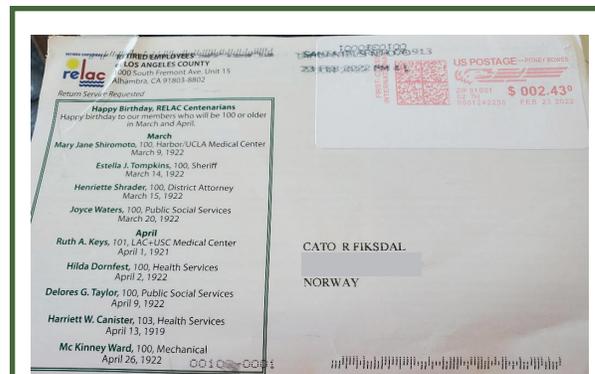
Olga Lederer, Covina, California

What a surprise I found in my mailbox!! A winner of the Valentine Day drawing. The \$25 will be put to very good use. Thank you so much. It is greatly appreciated. Thank you also for all you do for the retired employees of Los Angeles County! From a heart that cares...hugs and prayers. Blessings.

Janice Cavin, Mayfield, Kentucky

Thank you so much for remembering me on my 92nd birthday. I realize how blessed I am to be enjoying life in good health at this age. With great appreciation.

Edie Berk Baker, Downey, California



I got my RELAC newsletter today. The March/April edition. One can wonder what has become of the world's postal system. 120 days from postmark to mailbox. But please don't stop sending them.

Cato Fiksdal, Oslo, Norway

RELAC NEWSLETTER

Vol 57 - Sept/Oct 2022

Number 5

Retired Employees
of Los Angeles County
1000 S. Fremont Ave.
Unit 15, Alhambra, CA
91803-8802

(626) 308-0532
(800) 537-3522
Fax (626) 308-2901

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

Board of Directors

President

Brian Berger

Vice President

Linda C. Hopkins

Secretary

Evelyn Gutierrez

Treasurer

Dyanne Nelson

Past President

Dave L. Muir

Directors

Donald Fandry

Bobbie Fesler

Judy Hammond

J. P. Harris

Nora Jackson

Epifanio Peinado

Victoria Pipkin-Lane

Les Robbins

Diane Sandoval

Editor: Judy Hammond
Copyright © 2022 by RELAC. This information presented in your RELAC Newsletter is believed to be from reliable sources. However, no responsibility is assumed by RELAC or the writers for inaccuracies in the articles as published.

Office Hours

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Monday - Thursday

Closed Friday,

Saturday, Sunday &

Public Holidays

ALL IN THE FAMILY

The Leon County Family

Twelve members of the Leon family have collectively devoted more than 325 years to public service as employees of Los Angeles County. This gives new meaning to the term County Family!

Olga Leon Campbell was the first of the Leon family to work for the County.

Olga was hired immediately following her graduation from Washington High School (Los Angeles) in 1959. She essentially served her entire career in the Sheriff's Department, holding progressively responsible secretarial positions. She retired after 29 years of service, at which time she had achieved the level of secretary to the assistant sheriff, Bob Edmonds. She retired concurrent with her late husband, Robert D. Campbell, who was a division chief in the Office of the Sheriff and served the department for 33 years.

One of 10 children, Olga paved the way for three of her four sisters to follow suit.

The youngest sister, Ida Leon Ramos (a former member of the RELAC Board of Directors and interim office manager), began her service with the County in 1967 in the secretarial field and worked in the Health Services Department and the District Attorney's Office. She was chief of the Personnel and Public Affairs Office in the Department of Public Works at the time of her retirement after 36 years.

The middle Leon sister, Yolanda Leon Miranda, joined the County in 1974 after about 10 years in the



Leon family members who worked for Sheriff's Department, left to right: Bob Campbell, Olga Campbell, Yolanda Miranda, Rita Luna, Sylvia Luna, Lisa LaPiana, Charlie Gates. Not in photo: Frank LaPiana, Daniel Leon.



The Leon sisters: Ida Ramos, Olga Campbell, Yolanda Miranda, and Rita Luna (seated front).

private sector. Yolanda initially worked for the Health Services Department, then completed the last 30 years of her 36-year career with the Sheriff's Department, where she rose to the level of commander's secretary.

The eldest sister, Rita Leon Luna, joined County service later in life, quite by accident. She went to the Sheriff's Department Personnel Bureau with her youngest daughter, who wanted to submit an application for a clerical position, and the personnel clerk also offered her an application. Rita said, "Why not?" They were both hired. Rita, who passed away in May 2020 at age 87, retired with 10 years of service. Olga also has seven nieces and nephews who became County employees. Wendy Warren first worked for Mental Health until she joined the Superior Court and hopes to retire in 2023. Lisa Luna LaPiana joined the Sheriff's Department, as did Frank LaPiana, Daniel Leon and Charles Gates (who retired in March 2022). Alex Luna died in 2013 while working for the District Attorney's Office. Sylvia Luna worked for the Health Services Department, Sheriff's Department and District Attorney's Office before leaving for the private sector.

Many of the members of the Leon family are still active employees....judging from the past, it is just a matter of time until there is a 13th Leon in the County Family.

Got Mulch?

by Joseph Kelly, RELAC Member

Got mulch? If you don't, your local municipality might – and for free!

A friend of mine who is a master gardener was over for lunch recently and we talked of the water restrictions imposed in the City of Los Angeles, in which I reside. My friend noted that I did not use mulch in certain parts of my yard and garden, and he recommended I do so. Mulch is material (such as decaying leaves, bark, or compost) spread around or over soil to enrich or insulate the soil. Benefits of mulch include:

Retains Moisture. Mulch helps the soil to retain water. "Think of mulch as a sunshade for the soil," my friend stated. Soil in shade evaporates more slowly than soil in direct sunlight. Controls Weeds. Using mulch, you can limit the number of weeds that spring up in the garden. Maintains Soil Nutrients. Organic mulch can, over time, release nutrients into the soil. Enhances the Look of Gardens. Mulch, consistently applied, can enhance the look of a garden, making it look more rustic.

Based on our conversation, I set out on a multi-week effort to mulch certain parts of my garden. I calculated the total square footage to mulch to be 270 square feet. The Department of Water and Power recommends the use of cardboard as the first layer above the soil, with three inches of mulch on top. When I did the calculations, I needed about 70 cubic feet of mulch, which would cost me about \$275. I voiced my concern of the cost to my friend, who informed me the City of Los Angeles Department of Sanitation offered mulch free at various sites in the city. The source of this mulch is yard and tree trimmings that city residents put in their "green" garbage buckets each week that the Sanitation Department subsequently chops up as mulch. I consulted the Department of Sanitation's website and the nearest site to my home was in Griffith Park. I put the back seats of my Bronco Sport down,



covered the rear interior in plastic sheathing, and twice a week for about a month, I went to the Griffith Park mulch site and filled up that rear interior with free mulch.

A few suggestions:

The mulch site I went to is not monitored. You do not need to show that you are a City of Los Angeles resident to get free mulch. If you do not live close to any of the City of Los Angeles sites, call your local municipality to inquire if it has a free mulch program.

It's a good idea to wear gloves and eye protection to avoid the dust when shoveling the mulch. Bring water with you as well so you can stay hydrated. Although the site had shovels, they were sometimes in use by others, so bring your own shovel just in case. Avoid going to the site during the hottest parts of the day. You get a workout in shoveling the mulch, so do it when it's cooler. I typically went at the beginning of the day or at the end of the day.

I never knew mulch in an enclosed space smelled until I had a lot of it inside my Bronco. Empty it from your vehicle as soon as you can. The beauty of laying out the plastic sheathing was that I could pull the four corners of the sheathing together, tie them into a knot, and then pull all the mulch out by holding that knot.

When the project was completed, I was very happy because I had achieved a number of objectives. Mulch allows more water to stay in the soil, makes my garden look better, controls weeds, and my accumulation of mulch gave me a different type of workout several days a week for a month. Use of free mulch that the Sanitation Department provided reduced my project costs significantly. Finally, this project is an everyday example of sustainability in action. Sustainability is usually defined as the processes and actions through which we avoid the depletion of natural resources to keep an ecological balance that allows us to maintain the quality of life of modern society. When we all separate our green waste, we reduce the waste in landfills, thereby making it available to the Sanitation Department to chop up so we can put it to another use, one that has the benefits cited.

Got mulch?

Keeping Up With Retirees

We asked two RELAC members to let us know what they have been doing since retirement. Their articles follow.



Kai, Devan, Valerie, Roy, Jai and Diyani

VALERIE COORAY

I worked for the County of Los Angeles at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center from 1979 through 2015. My husband and I emigrated in 1978 from Sri Lanka, an island at the tip of India, known as the pearl of the Indian Ocean. Prior to moving to the United States, I was the first female court reporter in Sri Lanka. Since moving to America, I changed course from legal to medical and sat for the Civil Service exam held at the Department of Health Services. In 1979 I started as a senior stenographer in the Department of Psychiatry and worked for the chairman, Dr. Milton Miller. My career with the County was as administrative secretary and fellowship coordinator. The departments I worked for at Harbor-UCLA included Paramedic Training Institute, Nephrology, Pulmonary and Critical Care. I retired as a fellowship coordinator after completing a period of two decades in the Department of Medical Oncology and Hematology. Much of my time with Harbor-UCLA involved coordination of the Physician's Fellowship program. I am most proud of the fact that in all the positions I held at Harbor-UCLA, I was able to help many young doctors going through the program and patients.

After I retired from Harbor-UCLA in 2015, I worked for two years with Rowen Chlebowski, M.D., Ph.D. at the Los Angeles Biomedical Institute. Dr. Chlebowski is a credentialed researcher with an emphasis on breast cancer therapy and prevention, menopausal hormone therapy influences on cancer and chronic disease, and lifestyle influences on breast cancer incidence and outcome. My job duties included running the County program in the department and assisting seven other attendings and many fellows. I assisted the chief with administrative functions in breast cancer research. My last job was with Emmaus Medical, a pharmaceutical company founded by oncologist Dr. Yutaka Niihara.

In 2019 I stopped working to take care of my husband, Roy, who underwent bypass surgery. He is doing well now. Roy and I have been engaging in homeless feeding in Skid Row for the past 15 years and hope to continue helping the less fortunate as best as we can. Also, we are part of the Clarendon Foundation, helping a Third World country with 27 projects for the past 23 years.

We traveled to many continents during and after the years that I worked. The last area we visited was Copenhagen in Denmark. My favorite country to visit was the Czech Republic, where in Prague we saw the Infant Jesus of Prague, a 16th Century wax-coated statue of the Child Jesus holding a globus cruciger of Spanish origin in the Disalced Carmelite Church of Our Lady of Victories in Malá Strana. We have also visited the Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal, Lourdes in France, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, Rome, the Holy Land and many other religious sites. We have been on many cruises and our favorite was the East European cruise. We hope to travel to Yugoslavia to view other sites of religious significance.

Roy and I have been married for 53 years and have two children: Dr. Dilrukshie Cooray, married to Anand Cornelio, and Reshan, married to Dr. Amali Jayasinghe. We have four wonderful grandchildren, Devan, Kai, Jai and Diyani. Our main focus is helping our grandkids. They are extremely bright and are focused and have a bright future. Devan, our oldest, is a proud recipient of a 2022 RELAC scholarship award and will be attending UCLA in the fall.

continued on p.10



VALERIA CAESAR

I worked for the County of Los Angeles at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Hospital from 1977 through 2014. During my years in Medical Records, later called Health Information Management Department, I was a medical records technician, medical records supervisor, assistant medical records director and, at the time of retirement, director of health information management.

I started working at Harbor General Hospital as a student worker in the Medical Records Department in 1972 after graduating from San Pedro High School. I later transferred to the Radiology Department. I left Harbor in 1974 and returned in 1977 as a laboratory assistant in the Pathology Department. I transferred to the Medical Records Department and later went back to school to receive my medical records technician license. In 2003 I mentioned to my co-worker Billie Holloway that I was thinking about going back to school to get my Bachelor of Arts degree. Billie never let me live that down. She encouraged me to go back to school, which I did, and in 2006 I received my bachelor's degree in health information management. Many thanks to Billie for all her encouragement and support.

Even though my job was stressful, it was also enjoyable. During my years at Harbor, I encountered good, hardworking employees. To show my appreciation, and with the help of Gracie McGloyn, we would buy gifts to raffle during departmental Christmas luncheons. Even though the department units had their own individual luncheons, we always came together for the departmental raffles. Other times, we enjoyed birthday luncheons. I am so grateful for meeting other department employees I can still count as friends. Those friends include other directors and managers at other facilities: LAC+USC Medical Center, Rancho Los Amigos Rehabilitative Center, Olive View Medical Center, Martin Luther King Outpatient Center, and health centers.

Much of my time with Harbor involved overseeing the release of information, inpatient, outpatient, emergency room coding, legal, hospital information desk, tumor registry, registering newborns, providing diagnosis and procedure codes to the billing department, reporting data to the state, medical record reviews, delivering medical records to court, scanning and uploading patient data to the hospital information system computer and provided training for health information students. I worked directly with department heads, physicians, nursing personnel, and hospital information systems; and implemented departmental policies and procedures and those related to the Hospital Accreditation/ Joint Commission. I am most proud of the fact that I received support from the managers: Alfreda Watkins, Nanette Jackson, Ladis Menendez, and Denise Gilmore; supervisors, and employees too many to name; and all those who retired before me. For physicians Roger Lewis, Darryl Harrington, and William Stringer -- who were there, without hesitation, when I needed assistance -- you will never be forgotten. Again, I thank all of you.

In 2018 and until the pandemic, I volunteered in the gift shop at Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Torrance. I enjoyed working there because it was completely different from what I was accustomed to when I was working. I was an active member of the Red Hat Society for 15 years. I enjoyed going to their conventions and participating in various activities. Unfortunately, due to some members' illness and deaths, we dismantled our group, but we had a wonderful time traveling while it lasted.

What I enjoy most is taking cruises. My deceased husband, Stan, my mother, our children, and I took many cruises in the Caribbean and to Mexico during and after the years that I worked, going to such places as Antigua, Puerto Rico, St. Maarten, Cayman Islands, Cozumel, Belize, Aruba, Roatan and the Bahamas. Before the pandemic, I traveled to Dubai and Abu Dhabi on a private tour and cruised from Barcelona to

continued on p.9

Peinado Heads Effort to Create Two New County Departments Out of One

by Epifanio "Epi" Peinado
RELAC Director

The Aging and Disabilities Department and Department of Economic Department are now fully formed County departments, with appointed department heads, a budget, and staff. Just as importantly, both new departments have been codified in the County's Ordinance. What started as theoretical and conceptual discussions at the highest levels in the County some years back, became a reality July 1.

What this means is that effective June 30, the Department of Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services is no longer, but it spawned the two new departments.

I was, and still am, very much honored to have been asked by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Fesia Davenport to lead the project of creating two departments out of one. As the supervising administrator, I worked closely with a variety of specialty teams from the Chief Executive Office, Department of Human Resources, County Counsel, Auditor-Controller, Consumer and Business Affairs, and the County Development Authority to implement an ambition plan that was approved in March 2021 with the goal of merging and decoupling a myriad of services, programs and commissions, and most importantly the talented staff. The target date for implementation of the entire project was October 2022 – a target date we exceeded.

I'd like to also share with you that the County hired a highly respected thought-leader to be its first director of the Aging and Disabilities Department, Laura Trejo. Trejo returned to the County in December 2021 after serving as general manager of the City of Los Angeles Department of Aging. The County is already benefiting from the leadership of Trejo in delivering and expanding services to the rapidly growing populations of older and adults with disabilities, as well as programs at the multi-generational community centers.

The Aging and Disabilities Department has two commissions -- the Commission for Older Adults (existing) and the Commission on Disabilities (added) -- in addition to managing the 14 community and senior centers in the county, with 490 budgeted positions. By 2030, the number of older adults in Los Angeles County is expected to be more than double the number from 2000, and one in five residents will be 65 or older in eight years.

I am still amazed how the County's Board of Supervisors, CEO, department heads, and key staff were able to embrace this project, allow this retiree to steer the ship, and get this done mainly via online meetings during a pandemic! I remain honored to have served the County, again, and it's a great reminder to each of us that we have learned a few things over our careers and we can option our talents to pay it forward by serving in any capacity with governmental, community-based, not-for-profit, or faith-based organizations. As retirees with special skill sets, we can continue to make a difference in the lives of others and improve our communities. Thanks to RELAC for providing me with the flexibility to be of service to the County.

Please view this award-winning video "Turning the Tables" produced by the County Communications Office and be inspired: <https://vimeo.com/654189988>

Peinado, Trejo



Valeriea Caesar continued from p. 8

Italy and to Greece. In May of this year, I traveled to Europe on a Dave Koz Jazz Cruise to the Netherlands, England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. In addition to enjoying those fabulous countries, we had the pleasure of listening to several artists. In 2023 I plan to travel on another Dave Koz cruise to Spain, Morocco, and Portugal. In a few months, I will be traveling to Hawaii.

I am most grateful and blessed to have my children, Desean and Monique Caesar, and my mother, Delores Gillum. My mother retired from Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in 1998. Spending time with my family is so precious to me. My goal in 2022 is to continue serving the Lord, working in my church and hopefully volunteering at another hospital and spending more time with family.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

June – July 2022

Assessor - Fred Wimberly
Chief Executive Office - Kathryn Porter
Children & Family Services - Rebecca Ballin, Howard Byas, Gayane Muradyan
Fire - Cameron Davey, David Inman, Shawn Youngman
Health Services - Rosemary Biddle-Childress, Sandhna Davida, Yolanda Gomez, Virginia Hastings, Elizabeth Moreira
Internal Services - Lorene Cleveland, Bruce Sinclair
LACERA - Gloria Young
Mental Health - Darryl Everage, Izabella Gokhman, Tina Mata
Natural History Museum - Kimball Garrett
Probation - Prabal Barkataki, Gloria Grice, Gregory James, Cynthia Lee, Carol Williams
Public Defender - Graciela Valenzuela
Public Social Services - Eunice Carmouche, Roberto Martinez, Lilit Poghosyan
Public Works - Samia Hourany, Raul Miranda, Mechelle Samuel
Sheriff - Karen Anderson, Dinah Grote, David Hontz, James Longobardo, Lenora Maxie, Jeffrey Siroonian
Superior Court - Diana Devilliers, Elvia Espinoza, Linda Klein, Ann Marie Patrick
New Associate Members - Felipe Canal, Cathy Davey, Shirley Hontz, Adrienne James, Gale Longobardo, Roberto Longoria, General Maxie, Kathy Molina, Relys Moreira, David Rozansky

Thanks for New Member Referrals

We would like to thank the 12 members who recruited colleagues to join RELAC during June and July. Due to our aging membership, we must remain vigilant in signing up new members to remain a strong organization to protect our hard-earned pension and health benefits. We are the only organization that exclusively serves the interests of Los Angeles County retirees, so help us help you. For membership applications and brochures, call the RELAC office at (800) 537-3522, e-mail admin@relac.org or go online at relac.org. Be sure to tell the new member to put your name on the application as making the referral.

Our thanks to these RELAC members (shown in bold) for referring new members (shown in italics):

Selma Anderson, *Karen Anderson*, Sheriff
Joycelyn Askins, *Cynthia Lee*, Probation
Alice Ayala, *Elvia Espinoza*, Superior Court
Awake Brown, *Rosemary Biddle-Childress*, Health Services
Dorothy Byas, *Howard Byas*, Children & Family Services
Mary Harrison, *Fred Wimberly*, Assessor
Doreen Heintzelman, *Gloria Grice*, Probation
Gail Houghton, *Diana Devilliers*, Superior Court
Carol Meyer, *Virginia Hastings*, Health Services
Les Robbins, *David Hontz*, Sheriff
Lisa Sevin, *Linda Klein*, Superior Court
Beverly Williams, *Rebecca Ballin*, Children & Family Services



Retired Department Heads Meet at June Luncheon

Twelve retired department heads met at the San Antonio Winery in Los Angeles on June 30 for semi-annual luncheon. All but three are RELAC members. The next lunch, open to all retired department heads, will be in December. Shown, from left front, are Brian Berger, Animal Care and Control; Joanne Sturges, Board of Supervisors Executive Office; Sachi Hamai, Chief Executive Office; Jim Jones, Internal Services; John Naimo, Auditor-Controller; and Sheryl Spiller, Public Social Services. From right front are John Wicker, Parks and Recreation; Jason Williams, Building Services; Steven Golightly, Child Support Services; Lynn Bayer, Public Social Services; and Harry Stone, Public Works. Former Coroner/Medical Examiner Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran attended, but did not stay for lunch.

Fire Chief Daryl Osby Retires

On July 30, Fire Chief Daryl L. Osby officially retired after 38 years with the Fire Department, 11 as chief. He was the ninth -- and the first black -- fire chief in the department's 99-year history, succeeding P. Michael Freeman in 2011 and also serving under John Englund. Before becoming chief, Osby was chief deputy of business operations, serving in that position since joining the department in 1984. He has served on the California State Board of Fire Services and is a former member and chair of the Los Angeles County Emergency Preparedness Commission.



With former Fire Chiefs P. Michael Freeman, at left, and John Englund



They're EGG-Cited

"Our first eggs!" RELAC members Marion and Benjamin Figueroa's pet hens, Monica and Phoebe, laid their first eggs... and now the Figueroas are enjoying omelettes, loco mocos, baked sweets and more.



Golf News

by Gil Sandoval
RELAC Golf Director

Los Verdes Golf Tournament – Aug. 11

Los Verdes has without a doubt the most beautiful views of any of the golf courses that RELAC plays. The weather was perfect and Eddie Otero won the A flight again, but in a very narrow fashion as he edged out Carlos Martinez in a card off as they both shot a net 72, the low net of the day. Carlos ended in second place. Another close race was between Murray Taubam and Tony Bacon, with both shooting a net 75 and Murray winning in the card off for third place.



First place in the B flight was Renato Daluyen with net 73. Al Kelly brought in a net 76, finishing second. Kenneth Reed came in third place with a net 78.

The C flight was a repeat win for Frank Martinez as he came in first with net 73. Following close behind by one stroke was Pete Serrano, who shot a net 74 for second place. Willie Lopez finished third with a net 78.

Norma Gutierrez and Shirley Johnston battled it out as Norma won the Ladies Flight by one stroke, shooting a net 79. Shirley brought in a net 80 to take second place. In third place at a net 82 was Cari DeBie, beating Marjorie Stevens-Kelly in a card off. We had six women playing in this tournament and we look forward to more playing in the future. Thank you all for playing!

The next tournament is scheduled at Lakewood Golf Course on Oct. 10. First tee at 8 a.m. The entry form is on the RELAC website at relac.org under the calendar section.

If you have a course that you would like to play, please let me know and I can add it to our schedule form next year.



Chinese American Veterans cont. from p. 5

About 3,400 Chinese American WWII veterans or their next of kin have been presented with the Congressional Gold Medal. Ed Gor, national director of the Chinese American WWII Veterans Recognition Project, said his goal is to find at least an additional 5,000 to properly thank and recognize them.

Wing G. Ow



If you are aware of any Chinese American WWII veterans or their families who have not heard of this 2018 legislation nor of the award, please contact me through the RELAC office. Our goal is to also share the stories of men and women like my father's and to help new generations of diverse Americans understand that the Chinese Americans participated and contributed in the fight for democracy and freedom for all citizens of the United States.

(Ed. Note: Phillip Tuey Ow, RELAC member, retired from the Chief Administrative Office in 2005 after 31 years of County service.)

Valerie Cooray continued from p. 8

Thank you, RELAC, for inviting me to share my story. I pay tribute to the County of Los Angeles for affording me the opportunity to serve for over 35 years. I enjoyed every minute of it.



Inside LA County

by Judy Hammond
Newsletter Editor

The ongoing clashes between the Board of Supervisors and Sheriff Alex Villanueva prompted a November ballot measure that would give the Board the power to remove an elected sheriff from office. Supervisor Kathryn Barger, the only vote against the measure, questioned why the sheriff was being

singled out of the eight elected County officials (including the supervisors) and noted there is already a recall process that exists to remove elected officials who fail to perform their duties. Chair Holly Mitchell acknowledged there are existing ways that a sheriff can be removed – by grand jury, a quo warranto action, or recall election – but said there needs to be the ability to “quickly respond to unlawful actions and egregious misconduct within a County that has a history of sheriff corruption.” Villanueva called the Board vote a “cheap political shot” designed to hurt his bid for reelection. “The people of L.A. would be better served if the supervisors spent their time doing their jobs by reducing homelessness and improving health care, instead of trying to seize even more power.”

Also on the November ballot will be a measure that would allow the County to tax cannabis businesses in unincorporated areas. Revenues would go into the General Fund

You ever wonder how much it costs to send ballots to every registered voter, which is required by a 2020 state law? In L.A. County, a pretty penny. The Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk said another \$50.5 million is needed for mailing services for Sept. 1, 2020 through Dec. 31, 2024 – bringing the maximum to \$94.4 million – due to the additional ballots and increased paper costs. In the recent primary election, there were 1,620,593 ballots processed and counted, with 28.48% of eligible voters casting ballots.

County supervisors approved a \$19,750,000 settlement to Marcus Matamoros, who in 2018 became a quadriplegic at age 18 after the car he was riding in crashed through a chain-link fence, plunging 10 feet into a creek bed in Agoura Hills. The lawsuit claimed an adequate guardrail or barrier could have prevented the accident.

The Board has asked staff to come up with a \$194.7 million funding plan by December to move forward on converting the mostly vacant General Hospital building at LAC+USC Medical Center into affordable housing units.

The Sheriff's Department has more than 1,100 personnel who are serving or have served in the U.S. military.

Rancho Los Amigos Rehabilitation Center, part of the County Department of Health Services, has been recognized as a 2022-2023 Best Hospital for Rehabilitation by U.S. News & World Report, ranked 19th nationally among more than 1,000 rehabilitation hospitals.

Facts from the 2022 Assessment Roll: A record \$122 billion (6.95 percent) increase over 2021 brought the total net value to \$1.89 trillion and nearly \$19 billion in property tax dollars. Real property sales added \$69.6 billion to the roll; the CPI adjustment mandated by Proposition 13 reached its full potential of 2%, adding \$34.2 billion; and new construction added \$6.3 billion. The roll includes 2,589,521 real estate parcels and business assessments, including 1,889,000 single-family homes, 250,000 apartment complexes, 248,000 commercial and industrial properties and more than 165,000 business property assessments.

The Board of Supervisors is considering implementing a paid family leave program for all eligible County employees.

The County has joined a joint powers authority to identify funding and continue planning for the first phase of a high-speed, intercity rail alignment that will connect high desert cities in L.A. and San Bernardino Counties. The 54-mile, high speed rail project is part of a larger plan to connect Los Angeles to Las Vegas.

The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved returning Bruce's Beach to the family of a black couple who purchased the site in 1912 to create a beach

resort for blacks at a time of racial segregation in Southern California, but was forcibly taken by the Manhattan Beach City Council in 1924. The County will pay \$413,000 annually to rent the property, appraised at \$21 million, to continue to maintain its Fire Department lifeguard training facility there.

Supervisor Janice Hahn provided \$2 million of her office funds to improve the Whittier Public Library, expanding reading areas and providing new technology and meeting rooms.

More than 4,000 individuals from nearly 30 different countries settled in L.A. County within the past five years, according to the California Department of Social Services Refugee Programs Bureau. The County has established an Office of Immigrant Affairs to assist immigrants.

Jackie Robinson Park in Sun Village has been designated a landmark by the Board of Supervisors. The park is said to be the first in the nation named after Robinson, who attended the dedication in 1965. The park is also associated with events related to the development of Sun Village by African Americans seeking employment and housing unrestricted by discriminatory practices.

With crime up, Metro is implementing a \$122 million pilot program to place up to 300 uniformed “ambassadors” on trains and buses to assist with directions, alert police to threats, point homeless to services, and make riders feel safe.

The Board of Supervisors approved the final master plan for the L.A. River, prompting two environmental groups to file a lawsuit over inclusion of plans by famed architect Frank Gehry to create elevated platform parks above the channel's floor and four feet above the rim of the channel's walls.

Watchdog group OpenTheBooks reported that a County lifeguard in 2021 earned a total compensation package of \$510,000 (which included \$246,000 in overtime) and a deputy sheriff \$712,000.

Sheriff Alex Villanueva estimated that his department might issue as many as 50,000 gun permits as a result of the Supreme Court ruling that applicants no longer have to explain why they need to be armed in public. This would be a huge increase over the 3,145 permits that had been issued as of the last week in June.

When Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer announced she was considering reinstating a countywide masking mandate, Supervisor Kathryn Barger issued an open letter to oppose the move, saying such mandates have no empirical evidence to back their effectiveness, are unenforceable, polarizing, and take a huge toll on the social-emotional well-being of children and youth. Barger's former boss, Supervisor Mike Antonovich, called for the resignation or dismissal of Ferrer after it was revealed publicly that her daughter, Kaitlin Barnes, a project manager at the L.A. County Office of Education, was involved in a study that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) relied on for school mask mandates. He said Ferrer should have told the public, the Board of Supervisors, and the entire Health Department about her daughter's involvement.

PASSAGES

Compiled by Judy Hammond,
Newsletter Editor



Belshe



Jimenez



Bracks



McCallum



Rosenfield



Adashek

RETIREMENTS:

Fire Chief **Daryl L. Osby**, who served 38 years with the department, including 11 as chief, retired July 30. First 5 LA Executive Director **Kim Belshe**, who served 10 years in the position. **Mead B. Jackson**, retiring from LAC+USC Medical Center with almost 62 years of service. **Antonia Jimenez**, who has served as head of the Department of Public Social Services since September 2018, with almost 12 years of County service, including serving as deputy chief executive officer, overseeing the Children and Families' Well-Being Cluster.

APPOINTMENTS:

Brandon T. Nichols selected as the new director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) at annual salary of \$353,921. Nichols, a 25-year County employee who has worked in the County Counsel's Office, Probation Department and Chief Executive Office, had been serving as interim director since April and had earlier served three years as chief deputy director of DCFS. Dr. **Lisa Wong** named director of the Mental Health Department following the resignation of **Jonathan Sherin**. **Laura Trejo** named director of the new Aging and Disabilities Department at annual \$267,500 salary. She has overseen the programmatic and policy operations of the Aging Branch of the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services since November 2021. **Kelly LoBianco** named director of the new Department of Economic Opportunity at annual \$234,000 salary. She has overseen the programmatic and policy operations of the Economic and Workforce Development Branch of the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services since November 2021. **Vincent Holmes**, a manager in the Chief Executive Office, selected to serve as interim director of the Department of Youth Development at annual salary of \$207,758, charged with developing the internal infrastructure and overseeing the creation of the new department in the next five to six months. Dr. **Jackie Contreras** is acting director of the Department of Public Social Services, following retirement of Antonia Jimenez. She also served as acting director of the Department of Children and Family Services in 2011 (after Jimenez resigned that position), but left after several months to go to work for Casey Family Programs. **Miki Esposito**, the first woman to head Lincoln, Nebraska's public works department and who later became a senior policy adviser to the mayor, named assistant director for the L.A. County Department of Public Works. Glendale Councilman **Ara Najarian**, the longest serving director of the Metropolitan Transit Authority -- who has been serving as the chair of Metrolink Board of Directors -- is the new Metro chair, replacing Supervisor **Hilda Solis**. Army veteran **James Zenner**, a Department of Mental Health manager responsible for veteran issues, named director of the Military and Veterans Affairs Department, replacing retired Ruth Wong, at salary \$170,872. Deputy Fire Chief **Anthony C. Marrone** named acting fire chief following retirement of Daryl Osby. Marrone, a 36-year fire veteran, headed the department in 2021 during Osby's leave of absence due to health issues.

DEATHS:

Former Auditor-Controller **Dan Ikemoto**, 92, who retired in 1993 after more than 36 years of service. Sgt. **Christopher Bracks**, a 16-year-old veteran of the Sheriff's Department who was assigned to the Walnut-Diamond Bar station, died after suffering a medical emergency while taking part in the National Police Unity tour in New Jersey. **Earnestene Wilson**, 88, who began working in the Second Supervisorial District Office in 2003, handling senior citizen-related matters in Athens, Willowbrook and East Rancho Dominguez. **Tim Matthews**, a 22-year Sheriff's Department sheet metal employee, who died at age 57 from pancreatic cancer. Retired (2017) Superior Court Judge **Alan S. Rosenfield**, 70, who first became a Municipal Court judge in 1990 after working as a deputy sheriff from 1976-84 and a deputy district attorney from 1984-1990. **Dorothy Bertolino**, 91, who began her career at age 23 as a County probation officer, a position she held until retirement 33 years later. **Catherine Marly Babcock**, 68, former director of marketing and communications for Walt Disney Concert Hall. Former Chief Deputy Assessor **Doug Boyd**, who served as appointee of both Supervisor Mike Antonovich and Supervisor Kathryn Barger on the L.A. County Office of Education Board; at the time of his death, he was assistant auditor-controller/treasurer/tax collector of San Bernardino County. **Barbara Yvonne Bigby**, appointed in 2008 to the County Sybil Brand Commission, serving 10 years and becoming the first black chairwoman. **Allen Ross Adashek**, 79, a deputy public defender for 36 years, from complications of Parkinson's Disease. Former Municipal and Superior Court Judge **Michael Luros**, 74, who retired in 2008. **Frank Garbutt Hathaway**, 98, a founding member of LACMA's American Art Council. **Rogelio Alberto Stone**, 80, named the County's public health disaster preparedness coordinator in 1992, who after retirement taught citizenship classes and published two books of poetry, one (Reflections) receiving the Christian Writers Award in 2012. Former Sheriff's Lt. **Michael J. O'Hara**, 83, who served 27 years in the department, retiring in 1994. **Don McCallum**, 86, an administrator at the LAC+USC Medical Center for more than 25 years. Dr. **Salah Rubayi**, 79, chief physician of plastic and recovery surgery at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitative Center, with more than 35 years of County service. **John Curtis Irwin Rocke**, 72, who served in the District Attorney's Office and the Public Defender's Office. Retired County Deputy Fire Chief **Robert Lee**, 77, the first African American to serve in that position. Dr. **Rinaldo Canales**, former ear, nose and throat surgeon at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. Former Sheriff's Lt. **Ronald Rocha**, who retired in 1999. **Jerry Turner**, former associate medical director of Harbor-UCLA Medical Center and an internationally renowned expert in tropical diseases. **Beverly Muench**, former chief deputy of Children and Family Services, at one time the highest-ranking Asian-American woman in County government.

ELECTIONS:

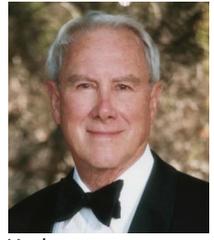
Supervisor **Hilda Solis** and Assessor **Jeffrey Prang** won re-election, receiving more than 50 percent of the votes in the primary. Sheriff **Alex Villanueva** neglected to get a majority, so faces retired Long Beach Police Chief **Robert Luna** in November. State Sen. **Bob Hertzberg** and West Hollywood Councilwoman **Lindsey Horvath** face a run-off to replace Supervisor Sheila Kuehl. **Katy Young Yaroslavsky**, senior aide to Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, is in a run-off with attorney **Sam Yebri** to replace L.A. City Councilman Paul Koretz.

COURTS:

Herb Wesson, former chief deputy to Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, was barred by Superior Court Judge Mary Strobel from temporarily replacing Mark Ridley-Thomas as a Los Angeles city councilman while Ridley-Thomas fights corruption charges since Wesson has already served the maximum number of terms as a councilman under the city's term limit law.



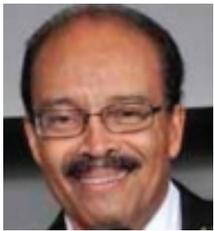
Canalis



Hathaway



Contreras



Stone



Muench



Marrone

Former Auditor-Controller Ikemoto Praised as Bright, Dedicated

by Judy Hammond, Newsletter Editor



Former Auditor-Controller Daniel (Dan) Osamu Ikemoto, 92, who retired in 1993 after more than 36 years of County service, died June 15 after a several-year battle with cancer.

"Dan was a great auditor-controller and a far better human being," said Richard

Dixon, who was chief administrative officer during Ikemoto's term as auditor-controller. "His life is an incredible story that includes growing up as an American youngster in Japan during WWII, later serving in the U.S. Army in Korea and a strong County career. In my 35 years with L.A. County, I knew and worked with many bright, dedicated, and skilled people, but none better than Ike!"

Ikemoto was appointed auditor-controller Jan. 8, 1991 and retired March 30, 1993. He joined the County in 1956, served as chief of the Auditor-Controller's Audit Division, executive assistant auditor, chief deputy, and, according to Dixon, the de facto auditor-controller the last few years of Mark Bloodgood's term. "He was so well-respected when Mark finally retired, I recommended and the Board of Supervisors appointed him auditor-controller almost immediately." But it was a reluctant decision for Ikemoto. "I had to beg him to take it -- he had stayed on only out of loyalty as Mark stuck out his last few years," said Dixon.

RELAC member Mike Antonovich, who was a county supervisor at the time, said, "Dan was a professional and wonderful to work with."

"As I think of Dan's life, the two or three most amazing things are his youth in Japan, his incredible determination and ability to rise beyond obstacles; and the number of people in the County that he befriended and mentored, including me," said Dixon.

RELAC member Nancy Singer, who was Ikemoto's administrative deputy, described him as "my mentor, my boss, and my friend."

"He took me under his wing when I started at the same level he had started 10 years previously and we became close friends for our entire County careers and in retirement. Along with Richard Dixon and Rod Ornellas, we expanded our working lunchtimes playing bridge into days together in retirement, right up until about a month before he passed. He was a great person, a devoted County manager and a fabulous friend."

Ikemoto served on the Fiscal Credit Union's Supervisory Committee for many years and was a member of the County Management Council.

Born in Los Angeles in 1930, Ikemoto attended UCLA and lived in Alhambra at the time of his death. He loved to play golf and go to dances with his wife of more than 60 years, Jean Kinuye Ikemoto.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by daughters Lisa Ikemoto, a professor of law, and Teri Griffiths, a certified public accountant; and two grandchildren, Taylor Griffiths and Kazu Ikemoto.

Ikemoto, a Buddhist, requested no services be held and no koden be sent.

Blanning Cited for Dedication to the Arts, Community

by Judy Hammond, Newsletter Editor

Olive "Ollie" Blanning, 84, former aide to Supervisor Mike Antonovich and president of the County Arts Commission, died May 22 in Greensboro, North Carolina, where she moved to be close to her brother following retirement.

County colleagues praised her for her skills, loyalty and dedication to the arts and community.

Blanning was born in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, in 1938 and grew up in Washington, D.C. After graduating from Penn State University with a degree in journalism, she worked doing research at the Library of Congress. After moving to California in the late '60s, she volunteered on Antonovich's election campaigns and joined his staff when he was elected supervisor in 1980, serving as his arts deputy and senior field deputy in Pasadena for 20 years, retiring in 2001.

"She was a tireless worker who worked days, nights and weekends to ensure that my constituents were being served," said Antonovich, a RELAC member. "She also excelled in training my interns to follow her work ethic, including Sussy Nemer, who became an outstanding senior deputy and follows Ollie's work ethic and problem solving legacy."

Supervisor Kathryn Barger, who also began her County career as an intern in Antonovich's office, said Blanning was her first boss. When adjourning the Board of Supervisors meeting in Blanning's memory, Barger said Blanning was especially proud of the key role she played in helping to establish the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. "Ollie greatly assisted Caroline Ahmanson and I when we established LACHSA - a school of choice and today's premiere arts high school in the United States," acknowledged Antonovich.

Throughout her life, Blanning dedicated time and energy to many organizations close to her heart. She was a board member of the A Noise Within Theater, the Wildlife Waystation, Foothill Family Services, and Southern California Presbyterian Homes. She was active in her church as a deacon and a Stephen Minister at La Crescenta Presbyterian Church. Upon her retirement, she served as Antonovich's appointee on the Arts Commission and became president.

RELAC member Laura Zucker, former executive director of the Arts Commission, said Blanning "was a wonderful arts deputy and the embodiment of how we can deal with policy differences in less contentious ways. When her office wanted to see things go a different way, we were able to have frank discussions that helped me understand the issues better, and hopefully craft better solutions. When our objectives aligned, she knew how to make it happen. She was a wise and important collaborator on cultural policy issues for the arts and will be missed."

Former Antonovich aide Leida Erickson, also a RELAC member, praised Blanning as "a wonderful, loyal mentor, whose dedication to the arts helped make it available to all. I am grateful to have had her in my life in service to the Fifth Supervisorial District."

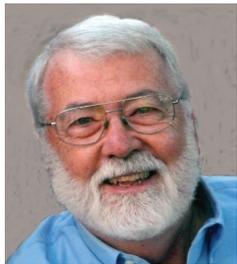
RELAC member Gerri Kariya, who worked with Blanning in the early '80s when both were on Antonovich's staff and then later as assistant chief administrative officer, was a close friend. "We had many opportunities over our mutual working years with the County to work and be together. Also, with other gal pals, including Gail Tierney, retired senior deputy to Supervisor Don Knabe, and Joan Boyett, retired education director for the Music Center, we enjoyed many concerts and theater performances and had adventures to several fun destinations. Ollie was very smart, thoughtful and dedicated to her work, community and faith."

Blanning is survived by her two children, Natalie and Brian; her brother, Larry; and her grandson, Danny.

With grandson Danny



Turner Was Noted Harbor Doctor



Jerrold "Jerry" Turner, former associate medical director of the County's Harbor-UCLA Medical Center and an internationally renowned expert in tropical diseases, died June 13, just two days shy of his 91st birthday.

A distinguished physician, medical educator, lecturer and administrator, Turner was a graduate of UCLA and the UCLA School of Medicine, while receiving additional degrees from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and holding fellowships in Louisiana and Puerto Rico. Having contracted paralytic polio in 1956 as a UCLA medical student visiting Guatemala, he forged ahead, earning his medical degree in 1958. He traveled the world to further his learning and lend his expertise to other countries, such as South Africa and Haiti.

Turner served for 38 years at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, primarily as the associate medical director, and also served as a UCLA School of Medicine faculty member and assistant dean. He was a prolific author of medical journal articles and textbooks and a decorated lecturer, having earned numerous teaching awards, including four coveted Golden Apple Awards. He was also elected to the medical honor society, Alpha Omega Alpha. He taught medicine at UC Irvine and was involved in establishing the medical school at UC Riverside. He founded a private diagnostic parasitology lab that serviced doctors in Southern California for close to 30 years and was one of the first to create a mail-in system for lab specimens, making the process convenient for patients.

RELAC member Barry Hunt worked with Turner from 1979 through 1981 as assistant hospital administrator at Harbor-UCLA. "I worked with Jerry on accreditation and many other issues. It was a pleasure to follow his lead, which always turned out to be the right direction for all of us in achieving patient care goals. His legacy lives on in the colleagues, friends and family members whose lives he so profoundly touched."

He is survived by Ellen, his wife of 44 years, his six children, Christine, Michael, David, Paul, Evan, and Eric; and five grandchildren (Cameron, Austin, Riley, Lin, and Lan).



A Gift from the Heart

Team members from the County Fire Department's crafts section handcrafted and presented a heartfelt gift to the family of firefighter Jonathan Flagler, who passed away in the line of duty in early January. Building crafts Superintendent David Breen, carpenter supervisor Michael Graham, and carpenters Eric Rische, Kylie Stump, and Ismael Valenzuela pitched in to build a personalized and inscribed memento box which carefully displayed Flagler's helmet and turnouts. The Glass Doctor in Montebello donated the glass for the memento box and Armando Villareal from the Internal Services Department's sign shop donated the lettering for the glass.

Former Judge Luros Praised for Fairness, Love of Law

Former Municipal and Superior Court Judge Michael Luros, 74, who retired in 2008 due to complications from diabetes, died on June 17.

Luros was only 33, working as an appellate lawyer with the State Public Defender's Office, when he was appointed to the Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1981 by then-Gov. Jerry Brown. He later won election to the Superior Court. In 1989, Luros was named the San Fernando Valley Criminal Bar Association's Municipal Court Judge of the Year and in 1992 the organization recognized him with the President's Award. He spent most of his judicial career in Van Nuys and San Fernando, although he has also sat in the Antelope Valley and in downtown Los Angeles.

Some critics said that Luros suffered from "police groupie syndrome," excessively lecturing misdemeanor defendants, setting high bails, carrying blank search warrants in his car, and often going to police stations in the middle of the night to sign warrants rather than having officers come to his home. He was reportedly assaulted several times while attempting to detain suspects on the street until police came.

Los Angeles Police Chief Michael R. Moore, who first met Luros as a young homicide detective working in the San Fernando Valley in 1988, disagreed. "While his critics would say he was too willing to use his authority in support of our work, I found he was fair, yet firm in ensuring the elements needed to secure a warrant were present and well-articulated. I also found his concern for the victims of crime was a deeply-held conviction."

Former Assemblywoman Paula Boland said Luros "truly loved his friends, his community, the law, the LAPD. He was a giver of his time and treasure. I will always remember his 70th birthday, hearing from so many folks about his generosity and caring about all who touched his life. We were all fortunate to have Mike serve as a judge; he was a true believer in the law and strived to do his job as our forefathers imagined. As chair of the Public Safety Committee in the state Assembly, I treasured Mike's input regarding legislation. His friendship and support was a special gift."

Friend Harold Shabo knew Luros for more than 30 years, working together in the State Public Defender's Office and later in Superior Court. "Despite very serious medical challenges, he worked hard and thoughtfully to do justice."



Robert Lee was First Black Deputy Fire Chief

Retired County Deputy Fire Chief Robert Lee, 77, the first African American to serve in that position, died on June 22. He served as a firefighter the last 31 of his 37-year County career.

Lee in 1984 became the first black battalion chief in the history of the Fire Department. He was later promoted to assistant fire chief and

then to deputy fire chief, again becoming the first African American to hold those positions in the department.

In announcing his death, the Fire Department said Lee, a RELAC member, demonstrated a strong commitment to the community and its residents throughout his career.

He was promoted through the Fire Department as a firefighter paramedic, firefighter specialist, captain, battalion chief, assistant fire chief, and deputy fire chief. As a deputy fire chief, he served in Administrative Services and the Prevention Services Bureau. When he was assigned to the San Gabriel Valley, his division was the first in the County to institute the "RESCUE Youth Program," a countywide Fire Department/District Attorney partnership to mentor at-risk youth.

Lee and his wife, Diane, were married 52 years and raised five children: Detra, Denise, Eric, Demetria and Antonio.



IN MEMORIAM

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

Aids Program - Joe D. Belen

Alcohol/Drug Pgms. Admin. - Dorothy Mae Crawford, Kathi A. Lousteau, Patricia L. Robertson

Alternate Public Defender - Martha A. Lakatos-Johnson, Albertajeon S. Lee

Assessor - Arthur R. Abuan, Donald Gilmore, Adrian A. Gomez, Edward J. Mc Guinness, Yvonne M. Monroe, Marian L. Reagan, John Woods

Auditor-Controller - Elsie L. Harrison, Daniel O. Ikemoto

Beaches & Harbors - Norman D. Killingsworth

Board of Supervisors - Ray D. Harris, Doris W. Rowe

Chief Executive Office - Hideo Anzai, Jeroline Marie Jordan

Child Support Services - Lydia Allen, Georgia Mae Glover, Deogracias Ortega

Children & Family Services - Beverly J. Carpenter, William B. Devers, Julie A. Herrera-Castellanos, Bessie M. Holmes, Helen A. King, Clarence Lee, David C. Luk, Rachel G. Matthews, Beverly M. Muench, Joan B. Norman, Kevin H. O'Connor, Violeta Pottenger, Gloria Rivera, Sheila Robinson Jef, Byford J. Singleton, Maria G. Valenzuela, Anne R. Williams, Alfredo C. Zaguirre

Communications - Ruben G. Olson

Compton Municipal Court - Elizabeth E. Casey

Correctional Health - Jasmin Horne

County Counsel - Jeffrey J. Lyon

District Attorney - Coy O. Barnes, Phyllis Carlson, D. Sterry Fagan, Gerald S. Hughes, Louis K. Ito, Richard W. Klink, Debra H. Mall, Janet S. Moore, Don M. Smith, John Carlos Tosello, Cleo M. Watkins

Engineer Facilities - Manuel J. Dimas, Edward A. Dutch, Irvin F. Tretteen

Fire - Alan T. Barndollar, James L. Corbett, William B. Cyr, Robert Lee, Thomas F. Miller, Richard Gary Noble, Allen L. Smith, Adrian W. Sollom, Tommy B. Talbott, Eiji Watanabe

Flood Control District - Irving Sherman

Harbor/UCLA Medical Center - Doris E. Austin, Rinaldo F. Canalis, Aurelia G. Cayetano, Arthur Cohen, Virginia De Avila, Albert Gibson Jr., Consuelo Akiko Gonzales, Abdul R. Karim, Grace Y. Mizumoto, Grace O'Reilly, Alma N. Orphey, Thelma M. Perez, Gloria Reynolds, Shirley A. Satterwhite, Judith R. Trunell, Jerrold A. Turner, Hilda E. Vary

Health Services Administration - Virginia Scott Emerson, Rosalind Freedman, Patricia Mejia, Rosina C. Varela, Julianne M. Wood

Internal Services - Walter Lee Adger, Harold V. Grace, Louis B. Hall, Russell M. Koppel, Frances Morales, Daniel F. Navarro, Gwie Nio Ong, Richard L. Pauwels, Jane A. Rivers, Eliana P. Tompkins

Juvenile Court Health Services - Erma Gay

King-Drew Medical Center - James Armstead, Daniel P. Cullen, Maureen D. Keeler, Walter B. Livingston, Dorothy J. Lollis, Donald A. McCallum, Johnetta Robinson, McKinley Smith, Callie Terrell

LAC+USC Medical Center - Harlene Breaux, Charles Pitts Butler, Carolyn Butler, Madelon M. Case, Sally Diaz, Paul Freeman, Marilyn Grafton, Valeria A. Hairston, Shirley J. Johnson, Ralph R. Mazzuca, Laverne V. Miller, Lida Mirzakhanyan, Consuelo Orona, Maxcine Patrick, Eunice M. Randle, Moses Remedios, Harriett E. Richards, Margaret G. Santos, Jacqueline R. Smith, Victor J. Souza, Tara G. Wolfe, Mary M. Young

LACERA - Christine E. Ford, Theresa Marinan

Long Beach Municipal Court - Virginia L. Best

Mechanical - William B. Hamilton Jr., Ronnie J. Hilliker, Harold R. Severson

Medical Examiner-Coroner - Jose J. Hernandez

Mental Health - Florence E. Brown, Theresa M. De Martinez, Mary A. Defever, Oscar Estrada, Shirley Gibson, Miriam L. Hansen, Estelle T. Hughes, Michael T. Johnson, Michael L. Lyles, Francis E. Mullnix, Elizabeth Lopez Munoz, Maria B. Ramirez, Portia N. Rayfield, Davinder Singh, Alfred S. Tyler, Judy Bejar Vargas, Barbara E. Wasileski, Clevester Williams Jr.

Museum of Natural History - Idelfonso Alvarez

Olive View/UCLA Medical Center - Douglas J. Ayers, Angelita C. Go, Ella S. Larson, Joseph Litvack, Joanne M. Marshall, Estela R. Martinez, Doris Mc Neil, Joseph S. Ndugwa, Beatrice Novobilski, Gary A. Rucker, Awanda E. San Martin, Ramona Thomas, Marilee Weida

Parks and Recreation - Clyde W. Clausell Jr., Larry L. Heacock, Johnny L. Huff, Peter G. Zabriskie

Probation - Aida Becerra, Mamie V. Bell, Dorothy A. Bertolino, Randolph J. Bray, Harry Cummings, Renso Y. Enkoji, Lavonne I. Everson, Henry L. Foshee, Michael Hong, Yesenia Jimenez, Hertha H. Lee, Daniel G. Miramontez, Richard T. Miyake, Wilbur F. Nelson, Robert S. Valencia, Jesus M. Vidal, Barbara Virden

Public Defender - Allen Adashek, Patricia A. Charles, Patricia Lynn Mc Connachie, Stuart R. Rappaport, Jose P. Zelaya

Public Health Program - Phyllis S. Allen, Richard A. Brand, Keith Camacho, Pamela D. Clardy, Lakesha D. Gamble, Gholam Jorjani, Neela R. Karnik, Donald David Mc Donald, Vicki D. Ward

Public Library - Pervis James Casey, Sherna L. Kopple Svens, Raya Sagi, Leslie Sakioka, Beatrice B. Steinberg

Public Social Services - Alice Anita Ayvazyan, Iris V. Bailey, Harriet Baker, Mariano M. Baldoz, Sofia Barraza, Jill Bornstein, Shirley A. Brown, Emma Castillo, Latasha N. Chowning, Brenda J. Crowder, Amelia L. Cumulada, Arthur D. Cutler, Damon K. Davey, Earlee Greene, Ana C. Gregory, Sue Griffin, Pearl B. Herrera, Martha G. Higgins, Diana Holland, Margierene Hudspeth, Velma Jones, Roberto Leite, Angeles O. Malixi, Devonne Marien, Rosalind Martin, Lucy G. Mena, Elizabeth J. Miller, Garrilee Mularky, Arlene S. Noel, Clyde Ochiai, Jennie G. Perez, Antoinette Petrosian, Kay D. Raff, Juan C. Salgado, Betty F. Sanders, Sandra L. Semtner, Jay M. Slevin, Gloria D. Vaughn, Xenia Williams, Margie Yoshizumi

Public Works - Daniel O. Aka, William E. Ballard, Bill R. Carnahan, Surjit Dhillon, Henry R. Estrada, Perry D. Hill, James G. Hobbs, Gordon E. Hoyt, Robert Dale Kapfer, Miguel R. Lopez, Yoshihiko F. Matsuno, Raul Nungaray, Richard D. Parker, Lawrence W. Pickel, Henry Salce, Robert Lee Slade, Joseph Tramte

Rancho Los Amigos Hospital - Modesta Aba, Concepcion C. Barcimo, Graciela O. Bice, Patricia K. Blinn, Martha L. Mc Curry, Sara Mulroy, Arthur Reyes, Alberta S. Rich, Terry Rico, Salah Rubayi, Macaria Sagredo

Reg.-Recorder/County Clerk - David Dimes, Sheila Jones, Margaret M. Miller, Leonard R. Olguin

Santa Monica Municipal Court - Geraldine C. Steele

Sheriff - Kit L. Armstrong, Willard E. Bauman, Angelo G. Bosco, Frank K. Carnahan, John R. Casey Jr., Max R. Chance, Patrick M. Connolly, James L. Cox, Menno G. Dammer, Timothy J. Dougherty, Edward G. Douglas Jr., George Elder, Edward A. Endersby, Mary A. Fierro, Laura G. Garnica, Larry W. Gilson, George D. Grap, Charles S. Heal, Dean A. Hluchan, Lowell C. Hoffman, Edward W. Honeywell, Robert L. Jordan, Janet C. Kelly, Douglas B. Kooler, William C. Larsen, David C. Luce, Emiko O. Matsuno, Pearl A. Mc Daniel, Ronald B. Mosley, Michael Joseph O'Hara, Robert P. Oliver, Kenneth H. Ostling, Catherine A. Pens, Oscar G. Ramos, Mildred Roberts, John L. Rogers, Victor R. Salcido, Carl Seltzer, Charles M. Vander Wende, Floyd C. White, Oliver R. White, Lanell L. Whitfield, Ronald S. Zega

Superior Court/County Clerk - Michael W. Boggs, Chandra D. Brown, Marion S. Estes, Michol C. Frain, Patricia A. Hall, Judith H. Hurley, Harry Kightlinger, Mary Ann Melvin, Lila M. Nowka, Carol A. Panariello, Elese D. Rogers-Lewis, Ida J. Wong

Treasurer/Tax Collector - Roberta Credit, Renita R. Gregorio, David F. Lorenz

Women's Hospital - Cora L. Lemott, Lucille MacDonald, Cecilio Muniz
Workforce Dev., Aging & Comm. Svc. - Jose Martinez, Sharon A. Sanchez

Unidentified County Agency - William S. Albright, Claire L. Donner



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

RELAC member Loretta Lopez



NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #66
PASADENA, CA

Return Service Requested

SEE YOU DODGER NIGHT
Friday, Sept. 23 – 7 p.m.

You are cordially invited to join RELAC members on Friday, Sept. 23 at Dodger Stadium. The Dodger's will be playing the Cardinals. Following the game, you will also view a great fireworks display.

The RELAC Dodger ticket discounted price is \$35 per ticket. Reserved seating is in Section 4RS and 6RS. Seating is limited, so reserve your tickets as soon as possible. A RELAC camera pan has been requested, so make sure you wave to everyone!

The right field reserve level entrance is the closest stadium gate to your seats in Sections 4RS or 6RS.

If you have already reserved your seat, parking information is as follows: closest preferred parking lot to your seats is Lot K. Prepaid parking is \$25 for general admission and \$40 for preferred parking. The rideshare lot (Uber, Lyft, etc.) is Lot 11. A Union Station bus also runs to Dodger Stadium.

If you have not already completed a reservation form, call the RELAC office by Sept. 12 to confirm arrangements. Digital ticketing will be coordinated by our office. If e-mail is not your choice, your e-ticket will be printed out and mailed to the address you have provided on your reservation form.

For additional information, contact the RELAC office at (626) 308-0532 or (800) 537-3522.

Five RELAC Directors Reelected

RELAC Directors Evelyn Gutierrez, Judy Hammond, Nora Jackson, Dave Muir, and Epifanio "Epi" Peinado have been elected to new three-year terms beginning Jan. 1, 2023.

No RELAC member filed a petition to run as a candidate for the Board by the July 6 deadline, resulting in the automatic election of the current directors whose terms expire Dec. 31, 2022. All five had been endorsed by the current Board of Directors.



Evelyn Gutierrez
2003 Retiree,
Chief Administrative
Office
RELAC Director, 2016



Judy Hammond
2011 Retiree,
Chief Executive Office
RELAC Director, 2014



Dave Muir
2009 Retiree,
LACERA
RELAC Director, 2011



Nora Jackson
2019 Retiree,
LACERA
RELAC Director, 2022



Epifanio "Epi" Peinado
2019 Retiree,
Human Resources
RELAC Director, 2020

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 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 this to RELAC or contact RELAC by phone as we DO NOT receive your address change from LACERA.