

## **STATEMENT BY CONNY McCORMACK ANNOUNCING RETIREMENT AS LOS ANGELES COUNTY'S REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK**

After 30 years of public service<sup>1</sup>, I have decided to retire at the end of this year. It has been an honor to serve the residents of Los Angeles County for the past 12 years as Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk and to lead a Department of exceptionally talented and dedicated employees committed to providing top quality service in all three diverse functional areas -- from election administration to recording property deeds to maintaining the public's official records regarding voting, property ownership, birth, death, marriage, and more.

My decision to leave at this time is based on several factors:

I have been approached by several foundations and, at this stage of life, am interested in shifting my energies and experience to election administration research and consulting both within the U.S. and worldwide. In the international arena, over the past several years I have been privileged to work with electoral commissions in six countries, sharing their passion and commitment to strengthening their democracies. I am eager to continue such work. Additionally, I am interested in bringing practical experience and knowledge into academic research in the area of electoral administration.

There is logic to the timing of my departure as it follows the Department's recent achievement of key milestones. After five years of planning and development, two significant, very complex technology projects were successfully deployed during the past year, one involving Elections and the other Recorder operations. Both have enhanced service to the public in important ways.

Elections: Implementing the InkaVote Plus voting system for the first time at the November 2006 election, followed by a series of elections this year including three to fill vacancies in state and federal legislative districts, has greatly enhanced the voting experience. At each of the County's 5,000 voting precincts, InkaVote Plus equipment alerts voters if they make a mistake, such as voting for more candidates than permitted in any contest. The system also allows voters with disabilities, including persons who are blind, to vote without assistance using audio-operated equipment. Tens of thousands of voters have expressed their appreciation for these new features. These improvements were not available at the precinct level for past Los Angeles County elections but have now been fully implemented in compliance with the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

Recorder: This year the Department launched the new Enterprise Recording Archive (ERA) system. By eliminating many previous manual processes, ERA has resulted in much greater efficiency in the recording of up to three million property documents annually. The ERA system was internally developed by the Department's talented information technology staff. It was also designed to accommodate electronic recording of property documents. With the passage of recent state legislation, followed by adoption last month of regulations by California's Attorney General, in the near future ERA will be used to facilitate the transition to paperless electronic recording of millions of property documents.

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<sup>1</sup> Biographical information attached.

The following statistics provide a snapshot of the work accomplished by the Department during my tenure as Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk:

### ELECTIONS

- More than 25 million ballots were accurately and securely counted during the conduct of hundreds of elections.
- More than 10 million signatures were submitted on initiative and candidate petitions which staff subsequently examined and verified.
- More than 7 million voter registration forms were received and processed.
- More than 8,000 candidates filed nomination documents to run for office.

### RECORDER/CLERK

- More than 19 million property documents were filed and officially recorded and 2.5 million copies issued of real estate records.
- More than 3.5 million vital records (birth, death and marriage) were recorded and 7.5 million copies issued to the public.
- More than ½ million marriage licenses were issued and 100,000 wedding ceremonies performed.
- More than 2 million filings were recorded to designate business names.
- More than 250,000 notary bonds and other statutory oaths were filed and copies provided.
- More than \$3 billion in document recording fees was collected and distributed to multiple agencies (\$250 - \$400 million annually.)

I am proud to have contributed to significant improvements in the Department over the past dozen years. My primary focus has been optimizing the use of modern technology to streamline and ease the public's access to vital services. Highlights of achievements under my direction include:

- Phasing-in multiple new voting systems after 35 years of punch card voting.
  - Competitively bidding and contracting for the purchase of 10,000 units of new equipment for 5,000 voting precincts to improve the voting experience and to comply with the requirements of federal HAVA law (as noted above).
  - Successfully implementing electronic touchscreen voting at multiple sites during the two weeks in advance of major elections. Over the past seven years, this system has provided hundreds of thousands of Los Angeles County voters with the opportunity to vote electronically prior to Election Day. This option has been especially valued by tens of thousands of voters who found out, after the deadline had passed to apply for an absentee ballot by mail, that they would be out of town or had a scheduling conflict which would prevent them from casting a ballot on Election Day.
- Opening three new branch offices to bring the Department's multiple services closer to the public. The number of offices serving the public countywide expanded to seven, including the Department's Norwalk HQs.
- Launching the Department's user-friendly website with easy navigation to access information on the full range of diverse services provided ([www.lavote.net](http://www.lavote.net)). The website contains interactive features such as enabling voters to find their assigned voting locations, including a map, by keying in their residence

addresses. It also provides interactive sample ballot content for each voter's geographic area and displays information in seven languages.

- Converting property documents and birth, death and marriage records from microfilm to digital images to facilitate scanning, storing and retrieving more than 100 million records and to provide access to these records at all branch offices.
- Implementing a web-based system for online filing of business names and to research past and current business filings.
- Installing a new voter information management system to provide greater functionality and data processing of voter registration, absentee voting, poll worker file management, petition verification, and geographic functions (precincts/streets/election districts). Significant cost savings were realized.
- Automating verification of voters' signatures on absentee ballots, resulting in speedier processing and significant cost savings.
- Developing creative avenues to recruit and train 25,000 volunteer pollworkers for each major election including supplementing experienced pollworkers with thousands of high school and college students as well as county employees.
- Expanding services to candidates by enabling online candidate filing as well as online, electronic campaign finance filings.
- Encouraging involvement and partnering with external stakeholders via the formation of a Community Voter Outreach Committee (CVOC). CVOC provides an on-going forum for individuals and members of more than 100 community-based organizations to discuss key election issues and to disseminate information throughout the community. The goal is fostering civic engagement and enhancing voter education and participation.

Looking to the future: The timing of my retirement at the end of this year will allow for a smooth transition before next year's major election cycle. Given the wide range of responsibilities of this Department impacting the most personal aspects of the lives of 10 million County residents - from records of birth, death, marriage, property and their votes - I believe it is vital that the leadership of the Department continues into the future with a Department Head who possesses top management experience in both Elections and Recorder/Clerk operations. I am committed to assisting the Los Angeles County's Board of Supervisors and Chief Executive Officer in any way possible to assure the continuation of the exceptional services provided by staff at the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk and to sustain positive staff morale which is essential for successful delivery of vital public services.