

# Woman of the Year 2022



Monday, March 7, 2022



March 7, 2022

Dear Woman of the Year Honoree,

Congratulations for being honored as Woman of the Year, a significant recognition which speaks to your unique contributions to your community and the State of California. Since 1987, the California Legislature has set aside a day in March, Women's History Month, to recognize women who are making an extraordinary difference in their communities. In a state of nearly 40 million people, you are one of just 120 exceptional women being recognized for this honor this year. But you join a growing sorority of honorees who have received this recognition since the Legislature first set aside a day in March more than three decades ago.

There has never been a more important time for leadership than during this COVID-19 pandemic. In ways big and small, noticed and unnoticed, leaders like you have inspired and changed our communities for the better and kept us going during an extraordinarily challenging time. It is for this reason that we decided we must continue this recognition this year.

On these pages are the stories of your peers who are also making a difference in their communities. We who serve you here in the State Capitol are honored that you have accepted our commendation.

We hope that you will take personal satisfaction in this recognition, knowing that your leadership has brought positive change to your community and blazed a trail for other women.

Sincerely,

Cristina Garcia, Chair  
Assemblywoman, 58th District

Nancy Skinner, Vice Chair  
State Senator, 9th District



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LEGISLATIVE  
.....  
WOMEN'S  
CAUCUS

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# California State Senate

**SENATOR**  
**BRIAN DAHLE**  
FIRST SENATE DISTRICT



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RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION, ENERGY AND  
TRANSPORTATION

EDUCATION  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
TRANSPORTATION



**2022 Woman of the Year**

*Jeanne Dahle Taber*

Jeanne Dahle Taber is a woman who has dedicated her life to serving people in need.

When she was raising her family in Lassen County, she opened her home to her children's friends, helped people who were down and out, and hired young men to teach them how to work.

The family lived just two miles from the Intermountain Conservation Camp — a state prison camp. To win parole, the inmates needed a job on the outside. Once, the camp authorities asked if she could give an inmate work so he could be released and have a new start—she did. The inmate came to live with the family, and he got that fresh beginning. That's the kind of woman she is.

She started and organized youth camps at the family ranch — a boys camp and a girls camp for youths from Redding and Chico who might not otherwise get a chance to spend time out in nature. In the summer, the camp taught water skiing, gave individual driving lessons on the ranch, and led hikes at Burney Falls, which was always one of the favorite outings. The winter camp brought skiing at

Mt. Shasta, tubing down the big hill, and a huge bonfire for hot dogs, hot chocolate, singing and snowball fights.

Jeanne's family life was not always easy. Her husband was an alcoholic. After years of trying to solve this problem, she left him. She loved him but couldn't live that way. She was courageous and went to Pasadena, where her mother lived.

She set out to learn everything she could about alcoholism. She volunteered at the Human Potential Center in the alcoholism department. After she had been there for two weeks, the manager hired her full time. She worked with St. Luke's Hospital helping people to get into recovery and giving their families support and encouragement.

Jeanne's husband finally went to St. Luke's Hospital for recovery. He never had another alcoholic drink and was clean and sober for

30 years and six months until he died. She had a great life with him for the 30 years of sobriety.

Today Jeanne is a deaconess in her church, and her pastor has assigned her to the Card Ministry. Pastors all over the world send prayer requests to the home office in Cincinnati, Ohio, for people who are enduring health problems, physical weakness or natural disasters. These lists are sent out every Friday. She is 81 years old and has been doing the Card Ministry 6 years. In that time she has sent thousands of cards of love and encouragement.

Her life of service and her noble character have been an example not only to her family but to all who have been blessed to know her.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Dahle". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Brian Dahle

State Senator, 1<sup>st</sup> District



# California State Senate

## SENATOR MIKE MCGUIRE

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S SECOND SENATE DISTRICT



### 2022 Woman of the Year

*Mary Ann Hansen*

Mary Ann Hansen serves as the Executive Director of First 5 Humboldt, an agency dedicated to supporting Humboldt County's youngest children and their families. Mary Ann has been a lifelong resident of Humboldt County, moving to Fortuna when she was a toddler with her family. Her dedication for the well-being of children began as a Human Development major at UC Davis, and continued as she moved on to found Ferndale Children's Center as a community-based non-profit, and later earned her Master's degree at Cal Poly Humboldt and taught for their Child Development Department for more than 20 years.

Mary Ann is a California-endorsed Transdisciplinary Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Practitioner and works to advance the importance of early childhood mental health through multi-disciplinary collaborations. Mary Ann is committed to the development of sound public policy which advances equity, prevention strategies, positive childhood experiences and healthy systems of support for young children, families and communities. She recently completed her term serving as Policy Chair of the First 5 Association of California and as a Board member of the First 5 Center for Children's Policy, which both promote best practices and policies to better support the well-being of young children and their families. She also serves on the California Surgeon General's Trauma-Informed Primary Care Task Force and co-chaired the Network of Care subcommittee, which was responsible for producing the Network of Care Roadmap, supporting health care providers to create systems of care for children and adults impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences. Adverse Childhood Experiences have lifelong impacts on child and community health, and her goal is to work with communities to prioritize children's optimal development.

Mary Ann's passion is doing her part to create a California where all children and families have equitable access to the supports they need to live their best, healthiest lives to create a strong California future.



Mike McGuire  
State Senator, 2<sup>nd</sup> District

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**BILL DODD**

SENATOR, THIRD DISTRICT



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SELECT COMMITTEE  
CALIFORNIA'S WINE INDUSTRY  
CO-CHAIR



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Jill Techel*

Techel was born in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Techel attended University of North Dakota and graduated in 1969. Traveling west, she ventured to Salem, Oregon. Techel started working as a field director training administrator in the Santiam Girl Scout Council. After moving to Napa in 1971, she continued her work in the Girl Scouts and assumed the same position in the Napa-Solano Girl Scout Council. She later retired from the Girl Scouts, but continued to participate in community events and discussions.

Starting in the 1970s, Techel has served on numerous boards, commissions, and committees including the Napa Parks and Recreation commission, the Napa-Vallejo Waste Management Authority, and Leadership Napa Valley. She also served on the Napa Valley School Unified District Board, on which she served 3 years as president.

With the death of Mayor Ed Solomon, Jill was appointed to fill the vacancy. She ran for Mayor of Napa after her term ended, and won the election in 2005. She was then elected for a second term, unopposed, in 2008, and a third term in 2012, and a fourth term in 2016, retiring in 2020.

Techel recalls the Napa River and Creek Flood project, which began in the mid-1990s, as the "most significant" among her projects in the community. The 1986 "100-year flood" created havoc in the City of Napa, where damage was estimated at \$100 million. The City Council sent the Measure A funding plan to the ballot, which was approved by voters in 1998. The Project provides

environmental restoration and economic development to achieve 100-year flood protection while maintaining the living river principles.

Other projects Techel is proud of include partnering with the county to consolidate government services and working to fill the many empty stores in downtown Napa and Napa Town Center.

Techel has two grown children, Eric and Kristen, and two grandchildren.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Dodd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "B" and "D".

Bill Dodd  
State Senator, 3<sup>rd</sup> District

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# California State Senate



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GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
VICE CHAIR



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Calli-Jane West*

Calli-Jane West is the Executive Director of the Butte County Fire Safe Council (BCFSC), where she has served for the past 16 years.

She has helped to implement dozens of forest health and wildfire safety projects through collaborations with diverse organizations, agencies, and community members. Having fun with wildfire education has been an important feature of her work, as she and the BCFSC continue to share Wildfire Ready Raccoon's safety messages and related children's book.

As Executive Director, she leads a staff team of fifteen, while also serving as support for satellite Fire Safe Councils and Firewise USA communities throughout Butte County.

Maintaining positive relationships with CAL FIRE, the US Forest Service, County Department heads, and community members has been integral to her work; helping the BCFSC to effectively implement programs across jurisdictional boundaries.

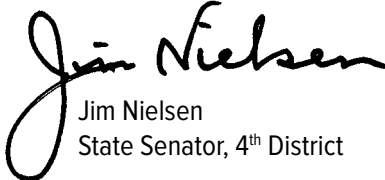
Through well thought out grant proposal authorship, she has helped provide programs such as the Community Chipper, Residents Assistance, 6th Grade Curriculum, and a multitude of forest health and fire prevention projects.

Calli-Jane has also participated in the completion of Butte County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan, its Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, and numerous integral evacuation plans, in addition to landscape-level, cross-boundary forest restoration initiatives.

Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her husband, Carson, and their four children on adventures to the rivers and lakes of the Sierra Nevada. She also writes stories, composing poetry and linking photography to text. Her storytelling interests focus on friends, community, and her unique interpretations of nature. Currently, she is pursuing a hobby in heirloom apple production in her own backyard in Paradise, CA. Some of Calli-Jane's writing and art have been captured in the children's book titled "Once Upon a Wildfire."

Having been personally impacted by the past several years of extreme wildfire events (Camp Fire of 2018, North Complex of 2020, and Dixie of 2021), she has continued her consistently passionate career in wildfire safety education and community wildfire protection via land management.

Calli-Jane holds a Masters in Geography from CSU, Chico. She is an original Butte County native; the place of her childhood home was burned to the ground during the North Complex Fire of 2020.



Jim Nielsen  
State Senator, 4<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

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MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS  
NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER

LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS  
LEGISLATIVE WOMEN'S CAUCUS



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Suzanne Daveluy*

Suzanne Daveluy retired as the City of Stockton's Director of Community Services – Libraries and Recreation – in 2021. As Director, she oversaw the 16-branch Stockton-San Joaquin County Public Library system, 5 community centers, sports and fields, special events and contracted facilities. She began her career with the City of Stockton in 1989 as a Library Assistant. She worked in many capacities within the Library, including children's librarian, programming and outreach librarian, and Deputy Director / City Librarian prior to her appointment as Director. She holds a Juris Doctorate from McGeorge School of Law and a Master's in Library Sciences from San Jose State University.

Throughout her career, Suzanne found her work with children and the provision of relevant services for all community members most fulfilling, all with the goal of making the library a welcoming space for all. To support young students struggling with reading, she worked with community partners to develop a summer program to provide one-on-one and small group lessons and activities. The majority of students in this program improved their reading by at least one grade level. She represented the library with community organizations, parent groups, and students of all ages. She actively contributed to the passage of Measure M, the quarter-cent sales tax for Stockton libraries and recreation that has allowed for the building of a new library/community center in northeast Stockton. Suzanne created opportunities for all community members with her pursuit of access and equity to quality library services, including high-speed Internet access and the building of micro libraries in Stockton's community centers.

A lifelong Stocktonian, Suzanne has worked with many community organizations and currently serves on the boards of Stockton Collegiate and All Saints' Academy. She will continue serving the community she has grown up in and loved through the years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Eggman".

Susan Talamantes Eggman  
State Senator, 5<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

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& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
EDUCATION  
HUMAN SERVICES  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE  
#3 ON HEALTH  
& HUMAN SERVICES



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Rosalinda (Rosie) Cerna, MPH, CP-FS*

Rosalinda (Rosie) Cerna MPH, CP-FS, has been the Partner Agency and Community Engagement Manager for Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services for over seven years. Rosie and her team are responsible for the oversight of 121 hunger relief organizations that distribute food to 156 sites throughout Sacramento County. Prior to her work with SFBFS, she oversaw compliance and food safety for California Foodlink's partner agency network. She also served as a consultant for Senior Gleaners. She has over twenty-five years of experience as an Environmental Health and Safety Engineer, retail grocery management, food safety professional, instructor, and consultant.

She received her Bachelor of Science in Organizational Behavior from the University of San Francisco, a Master of Public Health from Dornsife School of Public Health at Drexel University, Philadelphia. She is a board Certified Professional in Food Safety by NEHA, National Environmental and Health Association. She currently serves as a board member for the Sacramento Food Policy Council, previously served on the board of Alchemist CDC and volunteers time to Sacramento County's Superior Court's annual "Feeding the Homeless" function.

In addition to her work with Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services, Ms. Cerna's expertise in issues of community food insecurity has been critical to the outreach efforts of Senate D06, including helping our office acquire resources for Senator Pan's annual Health & Safety Fair in the Del Paso Heights community.

Dr. Richard Pan  
State Senator, 6<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

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STUDENT SUCCESS

COMMITTEES  
AGRICULTURE  
EDUCATION  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
INSURANCE  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Susun Kim*

Susun, a 1991 graduate of New York University School of Law, is an experienced family law attorney with 15 years of legal aid experience. She enjoys creating new projects and participating in collaborative initiatives, i.e., collective impact work. She has helped put together countywide housing service collaboratives, developed the court-based housing law clinics, and convened a reentry initiative to assist the formerly incarcerated. She has been actively involved in the United Way's SparkPoint initiative focused on self-sufficiency. She serves on the steering committee for the Contra Costa County's Alliance to End Abuse Initiative and the Community Advisory Board of the Contra Costa County Community Corrections Partnership. Susun has extensive training and facilitation experience and previously served as faculty for national training institutes hosted by the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence. She leads partnerships with 52 collaborators in this work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven M. Glazer".

Steven M. Glazer  
State Senator, 7<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

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WOMEN'S CAUCUS

**COMMITTEES**  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
HOUSING  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
TRANSPORTATION



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Kimberly Aceves-Iñiguez*

For over 20 years, Kimberly Aceves-Iñiguez has been passionately committed to social justice organizing and advocacy efforts that bring voice and power to youth, LGBTQ people, Black, Indigenous, and people of color, and working class communities in the Bay Area. Before coming on as the Executive Director for RYSE, Kimberly served as the Executive Director for Youth Together, the founding organization of the RYSE Center. Kimberly has formerly served on the boards of Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center, Horizons Foundation, Youth Uprising, Astraea Foundation, and she served as the Advisory Board Chair for RYSE's planning phase. Kimberly has also been a strong advocate for people of color and youth within the funding community and has served as a community funding panel member of the Women's Foundation, Horizons Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, San Francisco Department of Children Youth and Their Families, Astraea Foundation, and the California Mental Health Services Administration. She is a former Rockwood Leadership Fellow, LeaderSpring Executive Fellow, and most recently a Stanford University Nonprofit Executive Fellow.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Skinner".

Nancy Skinner  
State Senator, 9<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
HOUSING  
JUDICIARY  
TRANSPORTATION



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Gisela B. Bushey*



An accomplished non-profit and philanthropic executive, for 20+ years Gisela has focused on engaging communities, developing corporate philanthropy programs, managing non-profit organizations, and implementing individual and team engagement programs for maximum social impact.

Gisela has been Chief Executive Officer of Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen for 4.5 years, growing their meal service programs over 300% since 2017 – from 547,000 to 1.8 million meals a year - with Loaves & Fishes now the largest prepared meals provider to the hungry, unhoused and food insecure in the Bay Area. Her work has included improving housing equity, education reform, hunger relief, economic justice, community development, children's health and welfare, and environmental sustainability.

Her ability to successfully develop effective, high-impact grant making and community outreach and engagement programs is derived from the insights she has gained from having grown both startups in need of structure as well as establish operations in need of a steady hand. Gisela is a passionate problem-solver, known for her creativity, team development, coalition-building and leadership skills.

Gisela brings extensive insight and understanding of the local and international non-profit sectors, non-profit management and organizational development.

She has received several awards for her efforts, including: the Silicon Valley Business Journal's 2017 Woman of Influence Award; the Silicon Valley Community Foundation's 2016 Corporate Responsibility Practitioner of the Year; the Association of Fundraising Professionals' Corporate Grantmaker of the Year; the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisor's 2020 President's Medal; and the Santa Clara County 2021 Certificate of Commendation for outstanding services to the unhoused.

Her work has also been recognized by: American Red Cross; National Society of Black Engineers; People Acting in Community Together (PACT); and the Entrepreneur's Foundation.

*Robert A. Wieckowski*

Bob Wieckowski  
State Senator, 10<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
SCOTT WIENER

威善高

ELEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT

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VICE CHAIR  
MENTAL HEALTH CAUCUS  
CHAIR  
COMMITTEES:  
HOUSING  
CHAIR  
GOVERNANCE & FINANCE  
HEALTH  
JUDICIARY  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
LEGISLATIVE ETHICS  
CHAIR  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION  
CHAIR



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Jupiter Peraza*

Jupiter Peraza is an undocumented trans woman, activist, graduate student of International Relations at San Francisco State University, DACA recipient, and Director of Social Justice & Empowerment Initiatives at The Transgender District.

Jupiter's work initially focused on immigrant rights and voter mobilization. Through her work as Director of Community Initiatives at Manny's - a community civic and political space in the Mission District - she led nightly programming on civics and politics at the local, state, and national level. During the 2020 Presidential Election, she led a national phone bank program, organized a text bank that sent over one million text messages, mobilized her community to write 25,000 letters to the swing states of Florida and Michigan for the 2020 Election, and traveled to Georgia to canvass during the Senate runoff election.

As a Mexican Immigrant raised in Paramount, CA - a small city in Los Angeles County - Jupiter grew up intrinsically curious and inquisitive about her identity, higher purpose, and place in the world, as she navigated the staunch and toxic heteronormative ideals in school and at home. Cinema, theater, fashion and community give her the comfort that she needs to survive and persevere whilst staying grounded and centered.

In 2021, as Director of Social Justice & Empowerment Initiatives, she led the initiative to designate August as Transgender History Month in the city and county of San Francisco - ushering in the nation's first commemorative month for transgender history. She also led The Transgender Districts' pilot housing subsidy program - Housing Opportunities for Transgender Tenants (HOTT) - which housed transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and intersex individuals in the San Francisco Bay Area. Jupiter is also part of the Dr. Beatriz Maria Solis Policy Institute (SPI) of the Women's Foundation of California. In addition, she helped provide access to vaccines and testing in the Tenderloin District, serving one of the most underserved communities from the city of San Francisco, ensuring their well-being and equitable access to these resources.

For this deep community commitment on the most difficult years in recent history, and story of personal resilience and overcoming adversities, Jupiter Peraza is recognized as the Senate District 11, 2022 Woman of the Year.

*Scott Wiener*

Scott D. Wiener

State Senator, 11<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

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PREPARING CALIFORNIA'S  
FUTURE WORKFORCE  
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MEMBER  
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HOUSING  
JUDICIARY  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #4 ON  
STATE ADMINISTRATION &  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Pastor Ella Luna-Garza*

The Rev. Ella Luna-Garza is a native of Austin, Texas and was raised into faith at Emmanuel United Methodist Church. She is currently serving at United Methodist Church of Merced, California in the California-Nevada Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Rev. Luna-Garza holds a Bachelors in Business Management Organizational Behavior, a Master of Divinity from Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University and is a fellow of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in fellowship for Pastoral Leadership and Public Life.

Rev. Luna-Garza has extensive experience working in advocacy and social change for grassroots organizing, community development, and access for the underserved community populations.

She is collaborating in leadership with Faith in the Valley, the Merced Chapter of Journey for Justice, the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministries of The United Methodist Church, the Center of Vision Enhancement (COVE) and the Literacy Coalition of Merced County.

Pastor Ella has most recently advocated and worked in support of the Merced Union High School Black Parallel School Board, Pride Merced, compassionate immigration reform, access for Mental Healthcare, healthcare for all, and various other initiatives within the diverse populations of Merced, California. She is actively engaged with the faith, educational and civic communities of Merced.

Rev. Luna-Garza has worked with at-risk children and youth, the homeless and transitional housing population, and other-abled communities. She has helped to develop and provide community linkages for holistic address of social issues, access, and services. Rev. Luna-Garza has worked in advocacy and service of the blind, deaf, and other-abled communities, as well as for persons with autism. She has extensive experience working with multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual constituencies and persons of color.

She has held various offices at district, conference and national levels of The United Methodist Church, including past Chair of The Order of the Elders of the Rio Texas Conference, Vice Chair for Conference Board of Trustees of the same conference, and on the Executive Board of The National Plan for Hispanic Latino Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

The Rev. Ella Luna-Garza has been active in building community, addressing community needs and leading community in Merced, specifically addressing Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals, Immigration detention and family separation, ICE involvement, racial equity, Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ+ allyship and advocacy, serves on the Continuum of Care for Merced and is active in city, county and state government. She has served as a Health Services Agency Volunteer in providing assistance in vaccination clinics through Merced County, and has led United Methodist Church of Merced Food Pantry to partner with over 35 agencies, organizations and civic groups to serve as distribution hub, feeding over 200,000 families through pandemic.

Pastor Ella is driven by deep faith and care of neighbor, seeking to unite community and care for the most vulnerable.

She is currently a Doctorial Scholar concentrating in Prophetic Activism creating symbolic relationships within the church/community for addressing social justice issues.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna M. Caballero". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Anna M. Caballero  
State Senator, 12<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
JOSH BECKER

THIRTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE  
CHAIR

JOINT COMMITTEE ON  
CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES  
VICE CHAIR

STANDING COMMITTEES

BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ENERGY, UTILITIES & COMMUNICATIONS

GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

TRANSPORTATION

SELECT COMMITTEES

CALIFORNIA-MEXICO COOPERATION

CYBERSECURITY & IDENTITY  
THEFT PREVENTION

NON-PROFIT SECTOR

JOINT COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Emily Ann Ramos*

Passionate about keeping Silicon Valley an innovative, inclusive and diverse community, Emily Ann Ramos has dedicated her career to protecting the rights of tenants and ensuring safe, stable housing for all.

In her role as a Housing Preservation and Protection Associate at Silicon Valley at Home, Ms. Ramos educates tenants and landlords about state eviction laws and rent relief resources. With a focus on equity, she works with policymakers to develop protection and preservation-related policies that help vulnerable tenants, low-income families and people at risk of becoming homeless.

Ms. Ramos's civic pursuits complement her career as a housing advocate. As a member of the City of Mountain View's Rental Housing Committee, Ms. Ramos helps develop rent stabilization policies and advises the community on tenant and landlord programs. She also serves as a board director of the Community Services Agency of Mountain View, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, and on the League of Women Voters Los Altos - Mountain View Area's Housing Committee.

Born and raised in the Bay Area by Filipino immigrants, Ms. Ramos holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the California Maritime Academy, and is Third Assistant Engineer Coast Guard License Certified. In both her professional and civic careers, Ms. Ramos has demonstrated her commitment to finding fair and equitable solutions to permanent housing for all.

A handwritten signature of Josh Becker in black ink.

Josh Becker  
State Senator, 13<sup>th</sup> District

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SENATE.CA.GOV/HURTADO

# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**MELISSA HURTADO**  
FOURTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES  
HUMAN SERVICES  
CHAIR

AGRICULTURE  
VICE CHAIR

BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HEALTH

INSURANCE

SELECT COMMITTEE

HUMAN SECURITY  
CHAIR



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Liset Garcia*

Liset Garcia embodies the spirit and tenacity of the 14th Senate District. A daughter of immigrants, she started her entrepreneurship early--she joined her parents selling produce in Los Angeles at just eight months old. Liset's parents made sure she knew from a young age that obtaining a college education was non-negotiable. As a result, Liset holds a Master of Public Health from the University of Southern California, and has a Bachelor's of Science in Molecular and Cell Biology with a minor in Psychology from the University of California, Merced. Before settling in Reedley, where she and her family acquired their beloved farm, she worked in community outreach serving expectant mothers who lacked healthcare. Throughout the drought, Liset continued to sell farm fresh produce grown on their farm at a farm stand known as "Sweet Girl Farms." She has teamed with a local beekeeper to place bees in her orange grove so she could sell blossom honey. Liset has additionally completed Reedley College's Healthcare Interpreter Certificate program and continues to pursue online courses in the human biology arena as a hobby.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Hurtado".

Melissa Hurtado  
State Senator, 14<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
DAVE CORTESE  
FIFTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
LABOR, PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT  
& RETIREMENT  
CHAIR

BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW

EDUCATION

HOUSING

HUMAN SERVICES

TRANSPORTATION

BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #5  
ON CORRECTIONS, PUBLIC SAFETY,  
JUDICIARY, LABOR &  
TRANSPORTATION



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Maritza Maldonado*

Maritza Maldonado, a proud daughter of Mexican immigrants, is the Founder and Executive Director of Amigos de Guadalupe Center for Justice and Empowerment. Maritza was raised in East San Jose's Mayfair community. Maritza learned advocacy as a child, where she lived in the same neighborhood as labor and human rights leader Cesar Chavez. Her family would conduct house meetings on social justice issues, teaching Maritza advocacy at an early age.

After graduating from San Jose State University, Maritza worked as a leader in PACT (People Acting in Community Together), eventually becoming Co-Chair of the community-organizing agency, where she led the campaign for the Children's Health Initiative and helped create a local school reform movement. She served 20 years in education in the Alum Rock School District, where she continued her advocacy for children.

She continues to advocate for her community as Executive Director of Amigos, supporting underserved community members, predominantly families, to become empowered and self-sufficient in the areas of housing, financial assistance, immigration, and education. Most of her staff members are community members who have come back to their East San Jose community to continue the work of uplifting the community and breaking the cycle of poverty. She also initiated the Si Se Puede Collective and became one of five founding members that provide wrap-around services for individuals and families in East San Jose's Mayfair community. Amigos is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.

Maritza would say that her work is driven by her faith, and she is just the vessel to carry the message. She is fond of quoting St. Francis of Assisi who said, "Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words." Maritza continues to spend her life empowering and creating systems change for low-income communities of color.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Cortese".

Dave Cortese  
State Senator, 15<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR

SHANNON GROVE

SIXTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT

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FAX (760) 228-2462



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Gail Zurek*

Gail Zurek, President and CEO of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, has nearly 20 years of experience helping communities solve complex problems while promoting local businesses. With a heart for local business, Gail and her team at the Visalia Chamber poured themselves into supporting business, providing resources, workshops, and support during the COVID pandemic. Businesses were forced to reimagine and innovate as the market changed overnight. Gail's innovative approach gave businesses real solutions and, perhaps more importantly, hope. From leveraging local relationships to create relief funds, to workshops about accessing federal and state programs, to weekly video messages communicating the latest business information, Gail was focused on making sure local businesses not only survived but thrived.

Serving the Visalia Chamber for over seven years, Gail has led community-wide initiatives to create a microbrew district to infuse a developing industry into Visalia's historic downtown; developed Jr. CEO to teach youth the value of starting their own business; and created Impact Leadership Conference to provide substantive world-class leadership training for young professionals in the Central Valley.

For Gail, her work and her passion for local business are grounded in the belief that a strong locally based economy creates quality employment, good neighborhoods, and ultimately healthy communities.

In addition to serving Visalia businesses through her position at the Visalia Chamber, Gail is a second-year student at San Joaquin College of Law. Pursuing her law degree will allow Gail to provide solutions to local businesses more effectively. Gail and her husband Michael have been married for twenty years, have two teenage boys, and firmly believe life should be an adventure.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Grove".

Shannon Grove  
State Senator, 16<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

**JOHN LAIRD**  
SEVENTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



**COMMITTEES**  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #1  
(EDUCATION)  
CHAIR  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT  
VICE CHAIR  
APPROPRIATIONS  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE  
ON BUDGET  
JUDICIARY  
LABOR, PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT  
& RETIREMENT  
NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER  
RULES  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE  
COMMITTEE ON RULES



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Mary Cortani*

Mary Cortani joined the Army and was one of the last US Army's Women's Army Corps (WAC's) service members who served from 1975 to 1984. She became a certified Army Master Instructor of Canine Education while serving in the military. Mary left the Army, earned her degree in computer engineering, and worked in information technology until 2007 while still training dogs on the side and participating in K9 Search and Rescue. In 2007, she started a full-time dog training business and also became an American Kennel Club Certified Canine Good Citizen© Evaluator during this time. In 2010, she was contacted by her first veteran, who had been on another organization's service dog waiting list for three years. Mary soon started working with this veteran which then became the beginning of Operation Freedom Paws.

Founded in January 2010, Operation Freedom Paws is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that matches dogs with individual needs, including veterans, first responders, children and others who have Post Traumatic Stress (PTS), Complex-Post Traumatic Stress (CPTS) and/or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) symptoms, or other physical, neurological, psychological challenges in order to restore their freedom to live full lives. Clients are taught to train a rescue dog for their specific disability and upon completion of the program become a certified service dog team. What makes this program unique is the fact that the service is completely free. All that Operation Freedom Paws asks for is the time commitment to finish the 48 week program. Through Operation Freedom Paws, Mary has helped over 482 clients including their 2,195 family members as well as rescuing over 390 dogs. Furthermore, Mary opened her kennel to pets that lost their homes during the state's devastating wildfires. In her own words during the Loma Fire, "The least we can do for those that could potentially lose everything they have, is let them know that their pets are safe and secure."

Mary's decades-long service to families across District 17 is the reason why she was named a CNN hero in 2012, Gilroy Chamber of Commerce 2021 Nonprofit Spice of Life Winner, and KSBW National Jefferson Award Winner among many other accolades.

Thank you Mary for your unwavering support to our community! Your work helping veterans and those with disabilities is making a noticeable difference every single day. Congratulations on being named the District 17 Woman of the Year.

*John Laird*  
John Laird

State Senator, 17<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

**SENATOR ROBERT M. HERTZBERG**  
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER EMERITUS  
REPRESENTING THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

COMMITTEES  
& CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS  
ENERGY, UTILITIES  
& COMMUNICATIONS  
GOVERNANCE & FINANCE  
JUDICIARY  
NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER  
RULES  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON RULES  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE  
AUDIT COMMITTEE



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Janet Marinaccio*

Janet Marinaccio has been the President and CEO of Meet Each Need with Dignity (MEND) since July 2017. Before her time at MEND, Ms. Marinaccio worked with Goodwill Industries International, and authored several papers and training programs including Maximizing the Mission: Strategizing for Optimal Job Placement Outcomes, Outcomes Management Self Assessment Guide and Training, Community Needs Assessment Toolkit and Training, Using Volunteers as a Mission Services Delivery Strategy white paper, and Veterans Employment Services: A Review of Effective Practices, among others. In 2020, she was named as the Nonprofit Leader of the Year by the San Fernando Valley Business Journal Women's Council. Her work with MEND emphasizes poverty alleviation, workforce development, and child welfare. Ms. Marinaccio has a multitude of experience fundraising and managing budgets in excess of \$20 million. Her expertise involves fundraising, program design and implementation, outcomes measurement and performance improvement, third party accreditation and certification, grant/contract management, and staff professional development. She is also certified by National Career Development Association as a Career Development Facilitator Master Trainer and E-Learning Instructor. Currently, she serves as an advisory council member on the CSUN Health Administration Practitioner Advisory Council. The Board provides input on Valley Nonprofit Resource's activities, and oversight to its programs.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert M. Hertzberg".

Robert M. Hertzberg  
State Senator, 18<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Legislature

SENATOR  
MONIQUE LIMÓN

NINETEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES  
BANKING & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS  
CHAIR

HEALTH

NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
PANDEMIC EMERGENCY RESPONSE

JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON THE NONPROFIT SECTOR  
CHAIR



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Lewanda Lyons-Pruitt*

Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt was born and raised in the deep South, Bogue Chitto, Mississippi, shortly after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus. She grew up in a loving home with maternal grandparents (who later adopted her, her sister and female cousin), one biological sister, one biological female cousin, and three male cousins. In 1973, she moved to California with her maternal aunt and uncle, Mary and Melton McMorris, both educators who played a major role in molding and shaping her.

Lawanda holds an Associate of Arts degree from Allan Hancock College in Santa Maria, a Bachelor of Science in Criminology from California State University Long Beach. She began her career with Santa Barbara County in 1979, becoming a Defense Investigator in 1984 and was later assigned to the Public Defender Office. In 1995, Lawanda became the first African-American woman in California to serve as Chief Investigator of a Public Defender's office. She served in that role until her retirement in 2016, after more than 37 years of service to the County.

She is a founding member of the Defense Investigator Training Accreditation Academy (DITA) - the first of its kind college accredited program in California and the nation that was specifically designed for defense investigators. Lawanda went on to serve as the first Chairperson and Instructor of Record until retirement in January 2016. The program is accredited through Allan Hancock College, Santa Maria. She served on the Defense Investigators Association (D.I.A.) Board of Directors since the late 80's.

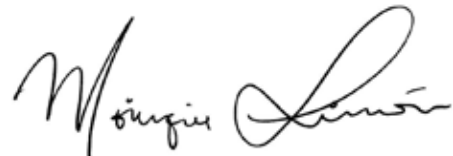
Growing up in the Deep South in the 60's and 70's afforded her the opportunity to have a deep understanding and appreciation of INJUSTICE, UNFAIRNESS, and INEQUALITY, giving her the passion and compassion for those less fortunate, for defense related work, civil and human rights, and social justice.

Ms. Lyons-Pruitt has been the president of the Santa Maria and Lompoc chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for over 14 years. She is a constant presence within the community and a continuous advocate for progress. Using this platform, she has worked to organize a wide array of initiatives from advocacy focused on civil rights and racial equity to administering COVID vaccination clinics within marginalized communities. Over the course of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Lawanda has

continued with her passion to serve. She organized COVID-19 vaccination pop-up clinics serving many communities and focused on educating those who were wary of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Lawanda has carried her passion in service by volunteering with the Good Samaritan Shelter and Helping Hands Outreach Ministry; a member of the 5 Cities Diversity Coalition which formed as a result of 2011 cross burning in Arroyo Grande; a member of the Democratic Club of Santa Maria Valley serving as Candidates & Endorsements Chair. She has served on the non-profit boards of The Fund For Santa Barbara (January 2016 - 2018), Grantmaking Committee (January 2016-2022) and the Santa Barbara County Action Network (SBCAN) (January 2016); She was a committee member of the Santa Barbara County Juvenile Probation Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Juvenile Justice System (R.E.D.) (August 2015 – 2019), Once Community Action Coalition (2015 - 2019) and the Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness Cultural Competency committee (2016) & Resilient Communities subcommittee (2021).

Lawanda is a devoted Laker fan and enjoys spending time with her daughter, Erika and her rescued pit bull dogs, Oliver and Bella.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Monique Limón". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Monique" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Limón".

Monique Limón  
State Senator, 19<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**CONNIE M. LEYVA**

TWENTIETH SENATE DISTRICT



CHAIR  
EDUCATION

DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE  
WOMEN'S CAUCUS

SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
MANUFACTURED HOME  
COMMUNITIES

MEMBER

BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS  
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ELECTIONS & CAMPAIGN  
FINANCE REFORM

HEALTH



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Soraya M. Coley, Ph.D.*

Dr. Soraya M. Coley became the first woman, first African American, and sixth president of the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona) in 2015. An accomplished educator and administrator with four decades experience in higher education, Dr. Coley has ushered in a new era of strategic leadership for the campus, establishing a vision for Cal Poly Pomona as a model for an inclusive polytechnic university that inspires creativity, discovery and innovation, embraces local and global challenges, and transforms lives.

As president, Dr. Coley leads an institution with nearly 30,000 students and 2,700 faculty and staff. Under her leadership, Cal Poly Pomona has continued to grow its legacy as the most diverse polytechnic university in the country and as a national leader in promoting social and economic mobility. Dr. Coley formally took office in January 2015, and during her tenure enrollment has grown by 6,000 students and graduation rates have reached historic levels.

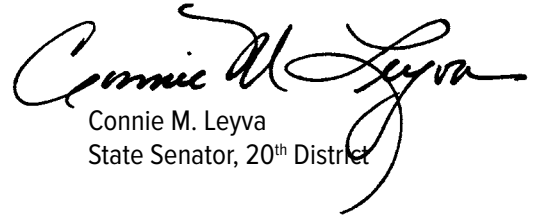
A student-centered, faculty- and staff-focused and community-minded administrator, Dr. Coley has led a campus-wide effort charting a new course for Cal Poly Pomona that will define the university for decades to come. To guide this effort, Dr. Coley led the creation of a new strategic plan and launched planning processes to re-envision both the academic enterprise and the campus' physical presence. As part of Dr. Coley's student-centered focus, Cal Poly Pomona has made a historic transition from quarters to semesters — a move that will improve the academic experience for students and increase career opportunities both during their time at Cal Poly Pomona and after they graduate.

Coley came to Cal Poly Pomona from California State University, Bakersfield, where she was the provost and vice president for academic affairs from 2005 to 2014. She also served as interim vice president for university advancement from 2011 to 2012. She has also held positions at California State University, Fullerton, the National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare, and Alliant International University.

In 2019, California Governor Gavin Newsom appointed Pres. Coley to the California Future of Work Commission, charged with making recommendations to the Governor and Legislature regarding the kinds of jobs Californians could have in the decades to come, the impact of technology, methods of promoting better job quality, modernizing worker safety net protections, and ready the state's workforce for the jobs of the future through lifelong learning.

Dr. Coley is also a member of the American Council on Education Women's Network, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the Pasadena Bioscience Collaborative, and the Los Angeles Coalition for the Economy and Jobs. She is a former member of the board of directors for Children and Family Futures as well as the Kern County Schools' "Ready to Start" program. In 2000, she was recognized as "One of Ten Women Making a Difference" by Orange County Metro Magazine.

Coley earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from Lincoln University, and master's and doctoral degrees in social planning and social research from Bryn Mawr College.



Connie M. Leyva  
State Senator, 20<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**SCOTT WILK**  
SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER  
TWENTY-FIRST SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
GOVERNMENTAL  
ORGANIZATION  
TRANSPORTATION



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Donna Hill*

Donna is an accomplished business owner and advocate in the Antelope Valley. As an active community leader she holds Executive Board positions on AV Chambers of Commerce and E & E Love Foundation, and serves as a member on the Board of Directors for Lancaster Museum & Public Arts Foundation (LMPAF), which supports the Museum of Art and History (MOAH).

Her entrepreneurial credits include two successful companies: MomsHouseAV and HillTop, LLC. When Donna conceived the ideas for each of these endeavors, she was equipped with only a dream, a passion to help others, and a need to honor her mother, Chalmetta E. Johnson. Without money to start her companies, but fueled with ambition, drive, and the inspiration of her mother, she successfully created a nonprofit that advocates active aging for seniors, MomsHouseAV. She later expanded her community support efforts with the creation of HillTop, LLC to support other nonprofits.

Since 2013, her non-profit, MomsHouseAV, has conducted numerous seminars, events, projects, and workshops designed to promote active, healthy living lifestyles for seniors. During the COVID 19 pandemic she expanded MomsHouseAV's services to include emergency response projects tailored for seniors. Her GranBag project – which provides activities, higher-end hygiene items and love – has served approximately 5000 seniors from March 2020 to date. As an active participant in her community, Donna is involved with over 60 local charities and organizations. Due to her tireless commitment to her community Donna (MomsHouse) has been awarded commendations from District 21 Senate Minority Leader Scott Wilk, District 36 Assemblyman Tom Lackey and Former Los Angeles County Supervisor-Fifth District Michael D. Antonovich.

Donna is a certified Diabetes Empowerment Education facilitator, and has a Master's Degree in Elder Care Administration. She is a devoted wife, mother and member of Living Faith Cathedral Church.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Wilk".  
Scott Wilk  
State Senator, 21<sup>st</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
SUSAN RUBIO

TWENTY-SECOND SENATE DISTRICT

STANDING COMMITTEES  
INSURANCE, CHAIR  
ENERGY, UTILITIES & COMMUNICATIONS  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
HEALTH  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON RULES  
TRANSPORTATION  
SELECT COMMITTEES  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, CHAIR  
CALIFORNIA, ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH  
MUTUAL TRADE, ART & CULTURAL EXCHANGE  
CALIFORNIA-MEXICO COOPERATION



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Deborah McCoy*

Ms. McCoy has overall authority for providing leadership, direction and administration of direct patient care activities, nursing practice and nursing education and development across the organization. She is responsible for supporting and modeling a culture focused on employee engagement, quality, patient safety, fiscal responsibility and the overall patient experience. Ms. McCoy is also responsible for the Cardiovascular/Neuroscience, Orthopaedic and Oncology service lines, as well as Acute Rehabilitation, the GYN Oncology Institute, the Colorectal Surgery Institute and several nursing units. She has worked in health care for four decades.

When she was in nursing school, she became intrigued by how one of her professors managed her insulin-dependent diabetes while being a fulltime educator. After graduation, her strong influence led Ms. McCoy to her first nursing position with the diabetes daycare center in Atlanta. This position was pivotal for her, as she began to think about how healthcare is delivered, how patients access the system and how they stay well between access points.

Ms. McCoy moved into management pretty early in her career. Her first management position was as coordinator for a perinatal program that focused on diabetes and pregnancy. She developed a multidisciplinary program known as Sweet Success, which is still active today, to help women control their diabetes prior to conception in order to reduce the risk of birth defects.

This turned out to be a turning point for her. The program showed her that providing healthcare across the continuum and achieving successful outcomes takes a "village" with strong collaboration between nursing, medicine, support staff, social workers and the community.

All of the leadership skills Ms. McCoy acquired and developed over the years have been tested by the pandemic. However, she and the hospital nursing team have cared for more than 3,800 COVID-19 patients who entrusted the hospital with their care and continue to do so, providing high quality care for all patients during these difficult times.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Rubio".

Susan Rubio  
State Senator, 22<sup>nd</sup> District

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# California State Senate

**ROSILICIE OCHOA BOGH**  
SENATOR, TWENTY-THIRD DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
BANKING & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS  
VICE CHAIR  
BUDGET  
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS  
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
EDUCATION  
HOUSING  
LABOR, PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT  
& RETIREMENT  
VICE CHAIR  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
VICE CHAIR



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Lesa Sobek*

Councilmember Lesa Sobek and her husband Jim have lived in Menifee since 1989. Since moving to Menifee and raising her three children here, Lesa has been a dedicated volunteer for dozens of organizations in Menifee. She worked in many capacities for Menifee Union School District and was eventually hired by MUSD to conduct research for a literacy program that she later implemented at Chester W. Morrison Elementary School. As a result of her hard work and volunteer efforts, Lesa was appointed to the City of Menifee Planning Commission before being elected to City Council in 2015. She was instrumental in forming the City's first Homeless Task Force, Park Ranger program, and is dedicated to creating a community culture that promotes safety for families and helps businesses thrive. Over her years of service she has been a champion for road repairs and infrastructure improvements, including the street light retrofitting program; responsible for new, quality parks; and has worked to enhance community programming for youth, seniors, and families. Lesa was a strong advocate for the creation of Menifee's first Police Department.

Lesa has been a dedicated volunteer and involved in various PTAs, school programs, churches, and booster clubs. In 2012, she was instrumental in working with City officials and the City Veterans Committee to create the City of Menifee Military Banner Program to honor the dedicated men and women who have served our country. Lesa also founded the Menifee Better Together Program and the Menifee Interfaith and Community Service Council. She was selected to represent Western Riverside Regional Conservation Authority in Washington, D.C. to advocate for conservation needs in the region. She is dedicated to increasing awareness of domestic violence and supporting regional nonprofits who serve domestic violence victims. Lesa is passionate about connecting with and serving others.

In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her three grown children, their spouses, and twelve grandchildren.

Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh  
State Senator, 23<sup>rd</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**MARÍA ELENA DURAZO**

TWENTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT



CHAIR:  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE  
NO. 5 ON PUBLIC  
SAFETY, JUDICIARY,  
TRANSPORTATION & LABOR  
LATINO CAUCUS  
MEMBER:  
BANKING & FINANCIAL  
INSTITUTIONS  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
GOVERNANCE & FINANCE  
JUDICIARY  
LABOR, PUBLIC  
EMPLOYMENT & RETIREMENT



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Connie Chung Joe*

Connie Chung Joe, JD, is the Chief Executive Officer of Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles (Advancing Justice – LA), the nation's largest legal and civil rights organization for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. Prior to joining Advancing Justice – LA in August 2020, Connie served as the Executive Director of the Korean American Family Services (KFAM) for 11 years.

Under Connie's leadership, KFAM nearly quadrupled its budget and staff, with culturally and linguistically responsive services to immigrant families, particularly those struggling with mental health, domestic/family violence, and acculturation stresses. Prior to joining KFAM, Connie was a public interest lawyer for seven years. She worked at the Housing Rights Center in Los Angeles representing clients in fair housing cases and the American Civil Liberties Union in Chicago working on immigrant's rights, reproductive rights, post-9/11 racial profiling, police accountability and First Amendment cases. Connie received her BA in Spanish and International Relations from University of Southern California and her JD from Georgetown University Law Center.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "María Elena Durazo".

María Elena Durazo  
State Senator, 24<sup>th</sup> District

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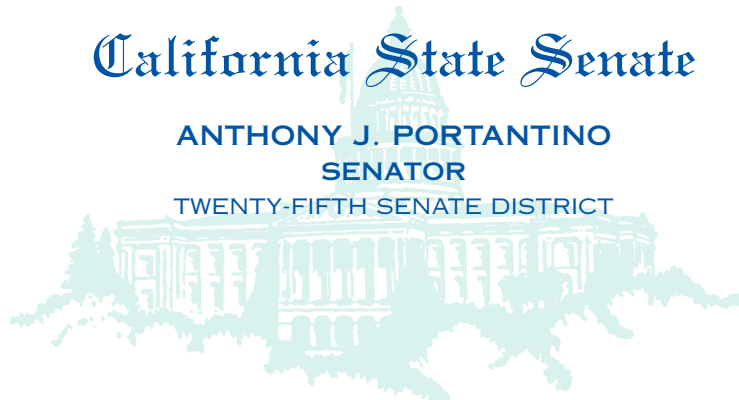
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# California State Senate

ANTHONY J. PORTANTINO  
SENATOR  
TWENTY-FIFTH SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
APPROPRIATIONS  
CHAIR  
BANKING & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
INSURANCE

SELECT COMMITTEES  
CALIFORNIA, ARMENIA & ARTSAKH  
MUTUAL TRADE, ART, AND  
CULTURAL EXCHANGE  
CHAIR



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Lila Ramirez*

Lila Ramirez is a native of New Mexico who moved to California in 1962. She has served her communities of Burbank and Glendale for over 60 years. She is a relentless champion for advancing social justice and democratic values with a strong sense of empathy and concern for those in need. For over 60 years, she has served numerous leadership roles for countless organizations and causes aimed towards increasing equity and expanding opportunities for all. Lila served as a 60-year member, past-president, and co-chair of the Holocaust commemoration by the Burbank Human Relations Council and a 50-year member of the League of Women Voters initially in Los Angeles and later Glendale-Burbank.

A successful business owner and entrepreneur, Lila's skills in business management, business development and financial oversight are an invaluable asset to any organization for which she has volunteered. Her in-depth knowledge of public policy with a preference to policies impacting youth, girls and women, education, our election process, and diversity, equity and inclusion and importance of civic engagement to our democracy have contributed to her extraordinary service to our communities. To know Lila is to know her generous heart to serve and her courageous voice that speaks out against injustice.

Lila is the middle child of 10 siblings who deeply loves her extended family. She is a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and great grandmother

  
Anthony J. Portantino  
State Senator, 25<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
BEN ALLEN

TWENTY-SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, CHAIR  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER  
TRANSPORTATION

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE ARTS, CHAIR  
ENVIRONMENTAL CAUCUS, CO-CHAIR



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Debbie Allen*

In a career that spans three decades, the name Debbie Allen is synonymous with dynamic energy, creative talent and innovation.

For her vast body of work, Ms. Allen has earned three Emmy Awards, a Golden Globe, five NAACP Image Awards, a Drama Desk, and the first Astaire Award (for Best Dancer). Her production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* on London's West End won the Olivier Award. She holds four honorary Doctorate degrees and has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

She was appointed by President George W. Bush to represent the United States as a Cultural Ambassador of Dance. She has been artist in residence at the Kennedy Center for over 15 years, writing and directing original works with the legendary Arturo Sandoval and James Ingram, such as: *Pepito's Story*, *Brothers of the Knight*, *Dreams*, *Alex in Wonderland*, *Soul Possessed*, *Pearl*, *Dancing in the Wings*, *Oman O Man* and *Freeze Frame... Stop the Madness*.

Her stage credits also include *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (on Broadway and London's West End). Her long list of directing and producing credits include television classics such as *Fame*, *Grey's Anatomy* (where she also recurs as Dr. Catherine Avery), *Scandal*, *How To Get Away With Murder*, *Jane the Virgin*, *Empire*, *Insecure*, *A Different World*, *Everybody Hates Chris*, *Stompin' At The Savoy*, *Polly*, *That's So Raven*, *Cool Women*, *Quantum Leap*, *The Fantasia Barrino Story*, and *Christmas on the Square*. She is currently the Executive Producing Director for *Grey's Anatomy* on its 17th season.

Ms. Allen was the creative force behind Steven Spielberg's Oscar-nominated epic, *Amistad*. She holds the distinction of choreographing the Academy Awards ten times.

She is influenced by the legendary artists who directed and trained her, among them: Katherine Dunham, Alvin Ailey, Bob Fosse, Jerome Robbins, Donald McKayle, Gil Cates, Alan Johnson, Derek Walcott, Twyla Tharp, Tatiana Semenova, Louis Johnson, Jo Jo Smith, Mike Malone, Gerald Freedman, Henry LeTang, Willie Covan, Patsy Swayze and George Faison.

Ms. Allen has directed and choreographed such legendary artists as Lena Horne, Sammy Davis Jr., Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, Janet Jackson, Will Smith, James Earl Jones, Phylicia Rashad, Gregory Peck, Mariah Carey, Queen Latifah, Dolly Parton and Savion Glover.

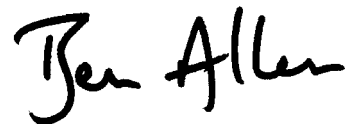
With her keen eye for talent, Ms. Allen discovered entertainers such as Jada Pinkett Smith, Gary Dourdan, and Jasmine Guy. She was responsible for giving Mia Michaels her first job choreographing for television, on Cool Women.

A true devotee of Arts Education for young people, she has trained some of the most dynamic young talent on the scene today - Vivian Nixon, William Wingfield, Jada Grace Gordy, Taylour Paige, Dion Watson, Kylie Jefferson, Wayne Mackins, Chase Maxwell, Danny Tidwell, Corbin Bleu, and Hannah Blake.

Her recent Shondaland production of Dance Dreams: Hot Chocolate Nutcracker on Netflix tells the true and inspiring story of what she does to enlighten, inspire and engage young people around the world through dance and theater arts.

In 2001, she and her husband Norman Nixon founded the nonprofit Debbie Allen Dance Academy in Los Angeles. The school's mission is to fill a void for youth who inhabit the spirit of dance and need the opportunity to discover what is possible.

A native of Houston, Texas, she is the daughter of poet Vivian Ayers and Dr. Andrew A. Allen, wife of NBA All-Star Norman Nixon, sister of Phylicia Rashad, Tex Allen and Hugh Allen, mother of Vivian Nichole and Thump, and grandmother of Shiloh and Avaia.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Allen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of "Ben" being a large, stylized capital "B".

Benjamin Allen  
State Senator, 26<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
HENRY STERN

TWENTY-SEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES  
CHAIR  
NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

MEMBER  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
ENERGY, UTILITIES  
& COMMUNICATIONS  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
JUDICIARY

SUBCOMMITTEE  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
NO. 2 ON RESOURCES,  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
& ENERGY



**2022 Woman of the Year**

*Rosa Sánchez*

Rosa Sánchez immigrated to the United States in 1985 with many dreams. She is married to her husband Jose—both are from Mexico. She has a beautiful family with two sons, Oscar and Noel. For the last 8 years she has been an in-home caregiver for Noel.

They have lived in Santa Clarita Valley since 1988. Rosa was an active volunteer in her children's schools, the Public Library, and also worked with the County of Los Angeles in a program serving newly arrived immigrants. In addition, she worked in several Latino Markets of the community for 17 years. Rosa and her husband also launched a small retail business selling fashion items and footwear in the Santa Clarita Valley.

The pride of Rosa's life is her two children. Oscar went to law school and Noel was active as a youth with the Sheriff Explorer program. For the last 8 years, Mrs. Sanchez has been an active member and volunteer with her Union, SEIU 2015. She proudly serves on the LA County bargaining team and is also one of the Union's many Democracy Captains, making sure all members understand the power of their collective voice and the importance of civic engagement.

She is thankful and honored for this recognition but most importantly wants to thank her husband Jose for his endless love and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry Stern".

Henry Stern  
State Senator, 27<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**MELISSA A. MELENDEZ**  
TWENTY-EIGHTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES  
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
VICE CHAIR  
HEALTH  
VICE CHAIR  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
INSURANCE  
MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS  
TRANSPORTATION  
SUBCOMMITTEE  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
SUBCOMMITTEE #3  
ON HEALTH & HUMAN  
SERVICES



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Donda Scholl*

Donda Scholl, known as Grammy, has been the lifeblood of kindness and happiness throughout her entire career working in the California State Capitol. Known by members, staff, and lobbyists as the person with the jar of jolly ranchers, Donda has always brought joy to the Capitol community. She has been a member of the Capitol community for decades – having worked for Assemblyman and Senator Tim Leslie, Assemblyman Cameron Smyth, and in both the State Assembly and the State Senate for Senator Melendez. Her infectious smile and discernable laugh is emblematic of living her life by the golden rule “treat others as you would want to be treated.” She is a true believer who lives her faith by example.

Known as one of the best schedulers “in the building,” her institutional knowledge on scheduling is the best of the best. She has worked with the Capitol Resource Institute to help teach some of its scheduling classes and become a mentor to many schedulers on both sides of the political aisle. Members and staff will also recall the famous Capitol Holiday Door Decorating contests and the infamous block parties. Both of which Donda has had a profound impact in the State Capitol in bringing staff together no matter your political stripes.

During her tenure with Senator Melendez, she has helped thousands of constituents from the Inland Empire and been a calming and welcoming voice for any Californian seeking assistance. Her countless hours of service to the people of the 28th State Senate District and the 67th State Assembly District, especially, during the pandemic, showcase her willingness to put others before herself. Donda has been an exceptional representative for the people of Riverside County in Sacramento and achieved all this while experiencing her own challenges. But even on the darkest of days her optimism and a strong belief in her faith, have brought brightness, warmth and joy to everyone. Her brilliance is inspiring and is truly worthy of recognition as the Woman of the Year for the 28th State Senate District.

  
Melissa A. Melendez  
State Senator, 28<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

**JOSH NEWMAN**

TWENTY-NINTH SENATE DISTRICT



## COMMITTEES

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
PANDEMIC EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE  
CHAIR

BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #5  
ON CORRECTIONS, PUBLIC  
SAFETY, JUDICIARY, LABOR &  
TRANSPORTATION

BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS  
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
ELECTIONS & CONSTITUTIONAL  
AMENDMENTS

LABOR, PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT &  
RETIREMENT

MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS  
TRANSPORTATION

JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE  
ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Dr. Joanne Culverhouse*

Dr. Joanne Culverhouse is the Superintendent in La Habra City School District. She has served as an educational leader for 41 years as a teacher, coach, principal and assistant superintendent and now superintendent.

Dr. Culverhouse has been a principal at the elementary, middle and high school level which provides her the unique qualifications to align district vision and supports to student learning priorities resulting in success at all levels.

She received her undergraduate and two Master Degrees at the University of Nevada, Reno, and she earned her Doctorate of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Dr. Culverhouse was recently named as one of the Top 100 Most Influential Game Changers in Orange County and selected as Superintendent of the Year by the Association of California School Administrators.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Newman". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Josh Newman  
State Senator, 29<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**SYDNEY K. KAMLAGER**  
THIRTIETH SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
APPROPRIATION  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
RULES

SUBCOMMITTEES  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
SUBCOMMITTEE NO.4 ON  
STATE ADMINISTRATION &  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT  
CHAIR



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Alma "Patty" Archuleta*

Alma "Patty" Archuleta has been a street vendor in the city of Los Angeles, on 31st and San Pedro Street for 6 years. She has led her own business while serving her community as an organizer for other vendors and maintaining her relationships as a mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, and caregiver.

During the pandemic, Archuleta saw firsthand how COVID-19 impacted the street vendor community. Many vendors along her corridor were unable to secure financial relief and were facing barriers such as access to email or a computer. While experiencing financial insecurity herself and frustrated at the lack of government support for street vendors, Archuleta worked with the organization Inclusive Action for the City to help street vendors apply for permits and find local and federal aid grants they could qualify for. Archuleta sees her fellow street vendors on 31st and San Pedro Street as family – and together they've worked to support one another through difficult economic times. Several vendors have donated supplies to children of fellow street vendors; including backpacks, shoes and clothes, and grocery bags to vendors who are in quarantine and unable to shop for food. For Archuleta and many within the street vendor community, health encounters with the pandemic became a personal reality. Archuleta tested positive for COVID-19 last year and feared for her life when she was hospitalized for ten days amid crowded and overwhelmed hospitals. During this time, street vendors from 31st and San Pedro Street rallied together to support her. When she recovered, Archuleta became even more inspired to give back to her community after seeing the devastation the virus had on the lives of 10 other street vendors from her corridor.

Even before the pandemic, Archuleta served as an advocate for street vendors and worked with the Los Angeles Street Vendor Campaign to have City Hall legalize street vending. She began selling clothing and other household items to support her son, who was experiencing mental health challenges. When she saw that there were nearly 100 street vendors on the corridor, she stepped up as a leader and organizer for them all; establishing regular meetings and working with other street vendors throughout the County to help them navigate permitting and regulations around their business. Alma Archuleta has been an amazing community member in Senate District 30, and her continued leadership and work as a street vendor is inspiring.

Sydney K. Kamlager  
State Senator, 30<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**RICHARD D. ROTH**  
THIRTY-FIRST DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
CHAIR  
HEALTH  
INSURANCE  
MILITARY & VETERANS  
AFFAIRS  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #4  
ON STATE ADMINISTRATION &  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT



**2022 Woman of the Year**

*Luz Gallegos*

Luz Gallegos was born and raised in the Inland Empire. She began, “en la causa, el movimiento” as a very young child with the guidance of her parents. Advocating for social justice, organizing, and marching alongside great leaders like Bert Corona, Soledad “Chole” Alatorre, and Cesar E. Chavez. Luz is a natural leader. Her organizing and advocating experience came first hand throughout her childhood. At a very young age she developed a community consciousness and commitment, which has become part of her life. She has led hundreds of community programs and campaigns dealing with an array of issues, immigrant rights, and civic engagement. Luz has mentored hundreds of youth and has motivated them to continue with their education while not forgetting their roots. She continues to lead at the TODEC Legal Center to give continuity to her family’s community commitment and legacy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Richard D. Roth". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Richard D. Roth  
State Senator, 31<sup>st</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**BOB ARCHULETA**

THIRTY-SECOND SENATE DISTRICT

STANDING COMMITTEES  
**MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
CHAIR  
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS  
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
GOVERNMENTAL  
ORGANIZATION  
INSURANCE  
TRANSPORTATION



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Jodi L. Hutak*

Captain Jodi L. Hutak began her career with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in 1999, graduating in class #304. She is currently the captain of the Pico Rivera Sheriff's Station.

The 22-year Sheriff's Department veteran has led the station with a wealth of knowledge, experience and community familiarity. These traits have been invaluable during the recent public health crisis.

She directed her station in many of the city's public safety programs, such as food and personal protective equipment distribution events, as well as COVID-19 testing and vaccine programs. Officials have commended her work in ensuring the safety and well-being of the community, while building partnerships with the people living and working in the city.

Captain Hutak's career as a Deputy began at the Twin Towers Correctional Facility. From there, she transferred to patrol at Century Station where she was a field training officer. She then transferred to the Special Enforcement Bureau in 2009 as a member of the Black Team. She became one of only six female Deputy Sheriff's to work SEB SWAT.

In 2010, Captain Hutak was promoted to Sergeant and was assigned to Lakewood Station where she worked as a patrol sergeant before being selected as the Bellflower Special Assignment Team Sergeant. In 2013, she became an Executive Aide at South Patrol Division Headquarters.

Captain Hutak was promoted in 2014 to Lieutenant and worked Carson Station as a watch commander for two years before transferring to the Community Partnerships Bureau where she oversaw the Sheriff's Department's Volunteer Programs (CLEPP Unit) and the STAR unit. In 2017, she was selected as the Operations Lieutenant at West Hollywood Station until 2018, at which time she transferred to Pico Rivera Station. She worked as the day shift watch commander for one year before being selected as the Operations Lieutenant in 2019 and assumed the role of Acting Captain in February 2021.

Captain Hutak was featured in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department 100th Anniversary of Female LASD Deputies display, a tribute highlighting the history of women in law enforcement and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. She has a desire

not only to preserve the legacy of women in law enforcement, but to mentor and empower others to achieve their career goals. In 2001, she was featured on the television reality show “Boot Camp,” and was selected as one of twelve contestants out of more than 5,000 applicants.

For the past seven years, Captain Hutak has dedicated her time coaching youth soccer in the cities of La Mirada, Whittier and Fullerton. Between her nearly four decades as a competitive athlete, coupled with undergraduate and graduate degrees in the field of Kinesiology and Sports Science, her passion is to share that knowledge to help others not only strive for top sports performance but also to live a healthy lifestyle.

Captain Hutak is the proud parent of a teenage son and an adult stepson. She resides in the city of La Habra Heights where she spends time working out or enjoying a variety of outdoor activities including running, hiking and cycling.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Archuleta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "A".

Bob Archuleta  
State Senator, 32<sup>nd</sup> District

STANDING COMMITTEES  
ENERGY, UTILITIES  
AND COMMUNICATIONS  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
HEALTH  
JUDICIARY



# California State Senate

SELECT COMMITTEE  
CHAIR, PORTS AND GOODS  
MOVEMENT

SPECIAL COMMITTEE  
PANDEMIC EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE

**SENATOR LENA A. GONZALEZ**

THIRTY-THIRD SENATE DISTRICT

SENATE MAJORITY WHIP  
CHAIR, SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION



**2022 Woman of the Year**

*Juanita Matthews*

Juanita Matthews is a shining light of hope and optimism, and her belief in who we can be as a community has not wavered despite her personal losses. She is a joyful, warm woman who welcomes all into her circle, and her commitment to doing her part to making our world a better place is truly inspiring.

Ms. Matthews had suffered even more personal loss over the years. In May of 1992 she received the devastating news that her oldest son and his three children were murdered by her daughter-in-law on Mother's Day. After years of walking through her own painful journey of grief, she found a way to direct her energies to help others -- turning pain into purpose. Ms. Matthews and her husband (now deceased) co-founded Springs of Hope Grief-Care Center in 2009 with the goal of "mending the brokenhearted".

Ms. Matthews attended Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee, Grace Theological Institute, California State University, Long Beach, Southern California Community Bible College, and Long Beach Bible College. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Biblical Studies.

Ms. Matthews is also an Assistant Pastor at Prevailing in Christ Ministries (Carson). For the past twenty years, Pastor Juanita has served through preaching, teaching, music ministry, counseling, conducting workshops, seminars, conferences, and pastoral care ministry.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lena A. Gonzalez".

Lena A. Gonzalez  
State Senator, 33<sup>rd</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**THOMAS J. UMBERG**  
THIRTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

## STANDING COMMITTEES

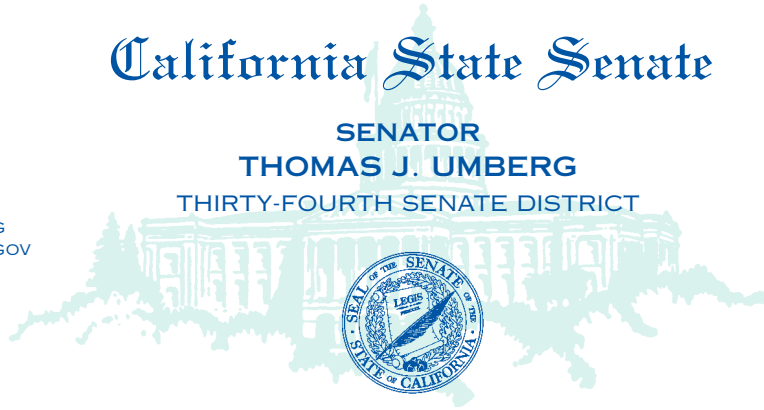
JUDICIARY  
CHAIR

HOUSING

MILITARY & VETERAN AFFAIRS

JOINT COMMITTEES

RULES



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Jean D. Romualdo, RPh*

Jean D. Romualdo, RPh, currently serves as Patient Care Services Pharmacist at Albertsons Southern California Pharmacy Division. She is a graduate of the University of Santo Tomas, Manila and the University of Southern California, Los Angeles with a Registered Pharmacist Degree.

Jean began her career at Albertsons more than 25 years ago as a Staff Pharmacist and then held a variety of leadership and managerial positions. Having held a variety of leadership positions within Albertsons' Southern California Division, Jean assumed the role of Patient Care Services Pharmacist where she oversees quality policies and procedures for Clinical Programs, lead execution and presentations in various health events, and provide leadership and technical strategies to Pharmacy Managers and Staff. Her current role and vast experience were very instrumental in facilitating the COVID clinics for the City of Santa Ana and other key organization and business infrastructures, such as public health, community churches, and other medical and critical corporations to prevent and minimize patient fatalities during the pandemic.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Umberg". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Thomas J. Umberg  
State Senator, 34<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**STEVEN BRADFORD**  
THIRTY-FIFTH SENATE DISTRICT

## COMMITTEES

PUBLIC SAFETY  
CHAIR

APPROPRIATIONS

BANKING & FINANCIAL  
INSTITUTIONS

ENERGY, UTILITIES &  
COMMUNICATIONS

GOVERNMENTAL  
ORGANIZATION



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Kavon Ward*

Kavon Ward is an award-winning spoken word artist and activist. Within the past decade, Kavon has won 1st place at the historic Apollo Theater and has shared the stage with gospel artists Hezekiah Walker, Patti LaBelle, Fantasia and activists like Joe Madison and Dick Gregory, to perform her piece, "I Am Trayvon Martin". Kavon is the founder of Justice for Bruce's Beach. She initially learned about Bruce's Beach online, when someone shared a link to a blog post that was written about it in May of 2016. She started her advocacy around Bruce's Beach on Juneteenth, 2020 when she and other co-founders of a group in the South Bay put together a picnic at Bruce's Beach to shed light on Black history in Manhattan Beach, specifically the land stolen from Black landowners Willa and Charles Bruce.

Kavon has since been quoted in the New York Times, the L.A. Times, the Washington Post, The New Yorker and a host of other articles. She has interviewed with NPR, 94.7 The WAVE, and a number of other radio stations, to discuss what justice for the Bruce family means and what reparations for Black Americans look like. Kavon has partnered with Patrisse Cullors, of Black Lives Matter, to create a petition through Color of Change calling for restitution and restoration for the Bruce family.

Kavon is a reparative justice consultant and Co-founder of Where Is My Land, an organization focused on getting Black land back nationally. She is a former Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) fellow and public policy lobbyist. Kavon holds a BA in Communications and a Masters of Public Administration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Bradford".

Steven Bradford  
State Senator, 35<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**PATRICIA C. BATES**

THIRTY-SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES  
APPROPRIATIONS  
VICE CHAIR  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
VICE CHAIR  
HOUSING  
VICE CHAIR  
RULES  
VICE CHAIR  
TRANSPORTATION  
VICE CHAIR  
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
INSURANCE



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Brandi Cassingham, MSN, RN*

Representing the coastal 36th Senate District covering North San Diego and South Orange counties, Senator Patricia Bates is proud to honor Brandi Cassingham as her 2022 Woman of the Year.

Brandi Cassingham has been the Chief Nursing Officer & Vice President of Patient Care Services at MemorialCare, Saddleback Medical Center (SMC) located in Laguna Hills, CA, since May 2018. Prior to her role as CNO, she was the SMC Executive Director for Acute Care Services since May 2016.

She started her nursing career in 2002 at the University of California, Los Angeles, as a cardiac and observation care nurse. She has her Associate Degree in Nursing from Mount St. Mary's College, her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing and Master of Science Degree in Nursing Administration from UCLA. Before her career in nursing, she obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Exercise Physiology from the University of Southern California.

She joined the MemorialCare family in 2008 as a graduate intern; developing the system-wide Nursing Leadership Academy. After her internship and prior to her Executive Director position, Brandi was a MemorialCare Lean Fellow, SMC Program Director for Professional Practice and SMC Manager for the Medical/Oncology unit.

CEO for Saddleback Medical Center, Marcia Manker, says it best: "Brandi is a compassionate and dynamic executive who is highly respected by our 600 nurses and the 2,500 physicians, employees and volunteers that support them. She has distinguished herself as an innovative and effective leader who always puts patients first."

Brandi enjoys traveling and outdoor activities with her husband, Joel and two children, Jake (age 4) and Madelyn (age 5).

  
Patricia C. Bates  
State Senator, 36<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
DAVE MIN

THIRTY-SEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
BANKING & FINANCIAL  
INSTITUTIONS  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE  
NO. 1 ON EDUCATION  
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
ENERGY, UTILITIES &  
COMMUNICATIONS  
TRANSPORTATION

SELECT COMMITTEES  
CHAIR  
CYBERSECURITY &  
IDENTITY THEFT  
PREVENTION



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Michele Richards*

Michele Richards was named OC Fair & Event Center's General Manager and CEO in December, 2019 where she has led the organization through the pandemic and eventual recovery. She leads by building strong relationships with employees, partners, elected officials and the public.

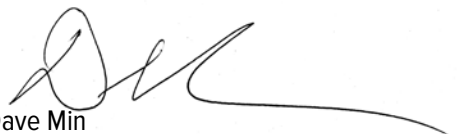
Michele took the helm at a critical time just before the pandemic shut down all public access and revenue-generating event business at OC Fair & Event Center, including the 2020 OC Fair. Working with the employees she credits as being the heart of the team, Michele led the organization back to financial stability with the reopening of public events and the much anticipated return of the 2021 OC Fair, the most successful in the fair's history.

During the shutdown, Michele harnessed the excellence of her team to work with state, county and local government agencies and nonprofits to host emergency food distribution events and COVID testing, and used the OC Fair & Event Center as a vaccination Super Pod to serve the community.

Prior to being appointed CEO, she was the agency's Vice President of Business Development for more than seven years, leading the marketing, communications, sponsorship, creative services, year-round events and exhibits and education departments. Most notably, she was responsible for guiding the development of marketing initiatives which significantly increased attendance at the annual OC Fair, launching new sales programs which generated additional year-round events revenue, leading a rebranding effort and advancing the growth of the organization's youth STEM event, Imaginology. But she is most proud of the impact the OC Fair & Event Center makes as a true community asset, serving during emergencies and celebrating the rich diversity of Orange County through a variety of cultural events and educational offerings.

Michele started her association with OC Fair & Event Center as an organizational consultant in 2002 where she helped guide human resources policy, programs and employee training and communications initiatives, while elevating the skills and competencies of employees at all levels.

Michele holds a degree from the University of Georgia and has more than 30 years of leadership experience in a variety of fields. She also serves on the Board of Directors for Girl Scouts OC, Orange County Sports Commission and California Construction Authority.

  
Dave Min  
State Senator, 37<sup>th</sup> District

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**BRIAN W. JONES**  
THIRTY-EIGHTH SENATE DISTRICT



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## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Christine La Marca*

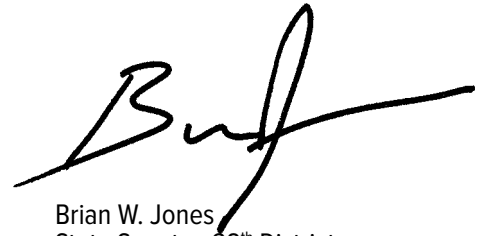
Christine La Marca is a native San Diegan. She attended University of San Diego High School and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from SDSU. The oldest of six daughters, she works in the family business as a housing advocate and is a strong supporter of educational opportunity and private property rights. Her volunteer efforts are generally focused on community, housing and education.

Together with her twin daughters, Ms. La Marca has been actively involved in SPRITES of East County, a mother-daughter philanthropic organization that focuses primarily on physically donating time serving our community. There are currently 22 designated SPRITES philanthropies; however, their members also serve in the churches, scouting, animal rescues and other philanthropic endeavors. Annually, nearly 200 SPRITES members collectively donate nearly 10,000 hours of community service. The hours are spent working in the community with philanthropies, contributing greatly to their ability to serve children, elderly, homeless, homebound, disabled, and other less fortunate individuals in the community. Ms. La Marca and her daughters each donate about 70 hours a year. Their very favorite work is with the residents of Noah's Homes, whom Christine calls, "the most loving people ever." She has served on the all-volunteer Board of Directors, as Treasurer, one year as President, and is currently serving as their 2nd VP of Fundraising.

Ms. La Marca has just begun her 5th year on the Board for the California Rental Housing Association (CalRHA). After serving as the organization's Treasurer for two years, she was nominated and elected to serve as the organization's President. In 2018 and again in 2020, CalRHA, along with some allies, organized and ran two large campaigns, Prop 10 & Prop 21, to defeat Rent Control in California. Additionally, CalRHA has worked hand in glove with California's Housing is Key program to get rental assistance flowing to renters across the State as they dealt with the financial insecurity that resulted from the pandemic.

Ms La Marca has done extensive volunteer work at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP), chairing the school's Golf Tournament committee for 3 years. Proceeds from this event helped fund all of OLP's academic enrichment programs, from the Debate Team, to Robotics, to Athletics. Over the past 3 years, even during COVID, The committee has raised over \$70,000 per year to supplement these activities, ensuring nearly every student, regardless of financial ability, has access to whatever program they want to participate in. This year, they are on track to raise over \$150,000.

Ms. La Marca has taken on additional roles in her service to the community. This includes 8 years on the Board for the Southern California Rental Housing Association – 8 years on their board, as well as spending over 100 hours advocating on behalf of College Prep Middle School to secure their charter with the State of California.



Brian W. Jones  
State Senator, 38<sup>th</sup> District

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STANDING COMMITTEE  
SENATE RULES  
CHAIR

## SENATOR TONI G. ATKINS

### PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE



### 2022 Woman of the Year

*Darrah DiGiorgio Johnson*

Darrah DiGiorgio Johnson has served as president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest since 2006. She leads one of the largest Planned Parenthood affiliates with 19 health centers in San Diego, Riverside, and Imperial counties, providing more than 240,000 patient visits throughout 19 health centers and via telehealth each year.

During her tenure at Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, Darrah has led the organization through some of its most challenging times and has built a strong foundation of excellence in health care, innovation, and dedication to staff engagement that will secure the fulfillment of Planned Parenthood's mission for generations to come. Throughout her career, she has been a passionate advocate for dismantling the stigma and silence surrounding abortion and expanding access to abortion care no matter where you live. Darrah is a strong proponent of comprehensive, age-appropriate, and medically accurate sex education, and believes it is essential in creating a world where every person has the opportunity to choose their own path to a healthy and meaningful life.

Darrah is committed to honoring PPPSW's values of equity and justice and has consistently prioritized training on a variety of issues surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion. PPPSW board members, executives, and staff continue to engage in opportunities for learning and self-growth, gain a deeper understanding of racism, and work to acknowledge the many biases in our country that impact access to health care and make racism a public health crisis.

In the face of unprecedented challenges and an ongoing pandemic, Darrah has led the charge to ensure PPPSW meets its goal of providing care, no matter what. She quickly launched a brand-new telehealth program, transitioned our educational system to online platforms, and made the necessary changes to ensure Planned Parenthood's doors remain open to all who need access to high-quality and compassionate health care.

Darrah continues to dedicate her career to ensuring broad public access to sexual and reproductive health care through direct service, education, and advocacy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Toni G. Atkins".

Toni G. Atkins  
State Senator, 39<sup>th</sup> District  
President Pro Tempore

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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
BEN HUESO

FORTIETH SENATE DISTRICT

STANDING COMMITTEES  
ENERGY, UTILITIES & COMMUNICATIONS  
CHAIR  
INSURANCE  
LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS  
NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
BANKING & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS  
SELECT COMMITTEES  
CALIFORNIA-MEXICO COOPERATION  
CHAIR  
HUMAN SECURITY  
HYDROGEN ENERGY  
STATUS OF BOYS & MEN OF COLOR  
JOINT COMMITTEE  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON  
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE



## 2022 Woman of the Year

*Ana Lilia Molina-Rodriguez*

Ana Lilia Molina-Rodriguez is a remarkable woman with an incredible story. She is a devoted wife, mother, daughter and Chief of Staff to California State Senator Ben Hueso. Ana Lilia Molina-Rodriguez is a graduate of Sweetwater High School. She attended the University of California San Diego and later received her law degree from California Western School of Law.

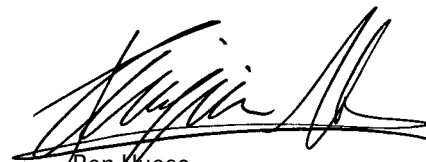
Mrs. Molina-Rodriguez has been committed to public service for over three decades. She served the 40th Senate District as a legislative aide for the former Assembly member Denise Ducheny and former Councilmember Juan Vargas. Mrs. Molina-Rodriguez also worked for years for the former San Diego County District Attorney Paul Pfingst handling domestic violence cases. She later became the Chief of Staff to former Councilmember Ralph Inzunza before joining former San Diego Councilmember Ben Hueso in 2006.

Mrs. Molina-Rodriguez has served as Chief of Staff for Ben Hueso as San Diego City Councilmember, Council President, California State Assembly member and California State Senator.

In a regular year, in addition to managing a large staff spread over three counties in California and engineering a meticulous constituent services program, Mrs. Molina-Rodriguez spends her personal time volunteering on campaigns to elect quality leaders across the state, mentoring future elected leaders, and guiding community-based organizations in improving social services. Mrs. Molina-Rodriguez became more involved in providing these services during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping as a key partner with the organization of food distribution drives, turkey giveaways, and providing supportive services to her own parents who were stricken with poor health.

Mrs. Molina-Rodriguez is a model employee and a tremendous asset to the people of the 40th Senate District. Because of her public service, thousands of constituents have received rent relief, access to better health care, education and employment.

Ana Lilia Molina-Rodriguez is a kind, generous and humble intellectual powerhouse in our community, and we are beyond grateful for everything that she does to strengthen the 40th Senate District.

  
Ben Hueso  
State Senator, 40<sup>th</sup> District

