

Maria Carmen Ramirez

On April 13, 2012, Governor Edmund G. Brown appointed Ms. Maria Carmen Ramirez to the Commission on State Mandates.

MARIA CARMEN RAMIREZ, (known as Carmen) is a public interest lawyer who has served the community since she was admitted to practice in December of 1974, graduated from Loyola School of Law, Los Angeles in May 1974. She was elected to a four-year term on the Oxnard City Council in November 2010.

Oxnard is the 19th largest city in California with a population of approximately 200,000 persons and is located in Ventura County on the coast between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara.

She also maintains a private legal practice in the City of Oxnard, focusing on consumer matters, Social Security Disability cases as well as immigration.

Raised in the City of Pico Rivera in the San Gabriel Valley of Los Angeles County, Carmen Ramirez is one of seven siblings. Ms. Ramirez has lived in Ventura County since 1978 and resides in Oxnard. She speaks, reads and writes Spanish fluently and has traveled extensively in Latin America.

Oxnard City Council Committees

As a member of the Oxnard City Council, she serves on the city's Transportation Policy Committee, the Financial Policy Task Force, the Cultural Arts Committee, and the City Wide Enhancement Program.

She was also appointed to serve on the Ventura County Animal Regulation Commission and the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District where she is currently the vice-chair. Additionally she represents the Cities of Oxnard, Camarillo and Port Hueneme on the Southern California Association of Governments agency.

As Executive Director of Channel Counties Legal Services

From 1975 until 1998, Ms. Ramirez worked in legal aid programs in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. For 16 years she was Executive Director of Channel Counties Legal Services Association, based in Oxnard that served the legal needs of the poor of both counties. Her responsibilities included overseeing litigation, financial planning, grant management, fundraising, personnel matters, board, community, government, and labor-management relations. Ms. Ramirez has

represented hundreds of clients in cases involving education, housing, consumer rights, employment, and government benefits such as Social Security Disability.

Professional Accomplishments

In June 2005, she was elected to the Board of Governors of the State Bar of California for a three-year term, representing the attorneys of five counties, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. She has served on the statewide Executive Committee of the Bench Bar Coalition, which promotes the needs of the public to access to justice as well as the budgetary needs of the California judicial system before the California legislature.

In 1998, Ms. Ramirez served as President of the Ventura County Bar Association and remains active in the Mexican American Bar Association of Ventura County, the Volunteer Lawyers Services Program Committee and the Lawyers' Referral and Information Service Committee of the Ventura County Bar Association.

Actively Involved In the Community

Ms. Ramirez is active in many aspects of the Oxnard and greater Ventura County communities, including as board member of the Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF), a trustee of the Colleges of Law for Santa Barbara and Ventura County, a member of the Ventura County Civic Alliance, the past president and current board member of the bilingual Ventura County theater company, Teatro de Las Américas and board member of the Center for Civic Education, a national program, headquartered in Woodland Hills, California.

In past years, she served as president of El Concilio Del Condado De Ventura County, the Ventura County Women Lawyers' Association, Ventura County Mexican American Bar Association, and Studio Channel Islands Art Center in Camarillo.

Award and Recognitions

Ms. Ramirez has been honored by numerous awards, including the Ben E. Nordman Public Service Award of the Ventura County Bar Association, the Ventura Chapter of Rotary's Paul Harris Award, and the El Concilio del Condado de Ventura Community Service Award, the Human Rights Award of the Baha'i of Ventura.

She was named Woman of the Year for the 35th Assembly District in 2003

by Assemblywoman Hannah-Beth Jackson and in 2009 as Senator Fran Pavley's Woman of the Year for California Senate District 23. On March 27, 2012, she received recognition for Women's Leadership from the Multicultural Programs of California State University Channel Islands in Camarillo. In May 2010, she received the "Exemplary Service in the Promotion of Literacy" by the Ventura County Council of the International Reading Association.

Volunteer Work

Her volunteer work includes focuses on environmental justice and sustainable development in Ventura County, the clean up of Halaco Metal Recycling Plant, an EPA designated Super fund site, located on Oxnard's Ormond Beach and promoting fair and comprehensive immigration reform.

Previous Employment

From 1998 to 2007, she coordinated the Ventura Superior Court's Self-Help Legal Access Center, located in the Colonia area of Oxnard, serving primarily the Spanish-speaking community. From 2008 until July 2009, she was the Community Planning Director for Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy, which worked on community issues involving environmental, economic and social justice in Ventura County.