

VENTURA COUNTY GRAND JURY

FINAL REPORT 1997-98

The Ventura County Grand Jury is an independent investigative body whose primary function is investigating and reporting on all governmental bodies within the county. It's powers and duties include bringing indictments for criminal or public offenses and being responsive to citizens' complaints. The Grand Jury is directed to prepare and issue a final report in accordance with Penal Code 933 and must include suggested means for solution of problems identified under Penal Code 916..

July 1, 1998

Honorable Charles W. Campbell
Presiding Judge
Ventura County Superior Court
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009

Honorable Judge Campbell,

On behalf of the 1997/1998 Ventura Grand Jury, it is with pride and pleasure that I submit our Final Report.

The Board of Supervisors, Judges of the Superior/Municipal Courts, and the citizens of Ventura County have been well-served by the talents, insights, experiences, and diligence provided by members of the Panel.

Operating within a continuum it becomes each Grand Jury's task to illuminate certain aspects of governments within the county. It is within that context that we reviewed County, City and Special Districts' operations and responded professionally and expeditiously to complaints from the citizenry. Additionally, we spent many days participating in the Indictment/Investigatory process.

This jury was focused on its duties and responsibilities; emphasized objectivity, thoroughly evaluated subject-matter before reaching conclusions, remained politically inert and was sensitive to the fiscal viability and impact of its recommendations.

Your cognizance of issues, patience and guidance has made our efforts easier. For that we are eternally grateful.

Sincerely,



Dr. Donald W. Thibeault
Foreman, 1997/1998 Ventura County Grand Jury

FOREMAN'S STATEMENT

The 1997/1998 Grand Jury as impaneled, sworn and charged by the Court on 1 July 1997 in accordance with Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution of C California which provides that a Grand Jury shall be drawn and summoned at least once a year in each county.

Representing a diverse group of citizens from each of the five Supervisorial Districts we set out immediately to learn procedures, customs, definitions and legalities which enabled us to organize into a cohesive whole while utilizing the various talents, abilities and skills among fellow grand jurors.

Philosophically, our purpose was to improve the use of county resources with the lowest cost to the people and an obligation to report facts, recommend remedies and commend superior[performance.

Our responsibilities in terms of powers and duties were categorized in three broad areas: a criminal area encompassing indictments, civil functions involving governmental oversight and responding to complaints from the citizenry.

Addressing our responsibilities sequentially the District Attorney brought many criminal wrong doings which led to indictments. Also, we spent many days investigating matters that led to arraignments. The bulk of this Final Report is the result of our civil oversight functions. Complaints from the citizenry were addressed with a singularity of purpose, in total confidentiality and disposed in an expeditious and fair manner.

In our dealings with governmental officials we found that Ventura County is blessed with professional, informed, competent and personable individuals. Especially responsive were the County Counsel, the District Attorney and Jury Services.

Every Grand Jury is an entity unto itself with failings and foibles and strengths that give meaning to its purpose for being. This particular Panel approached its work with zeal, enthusiasm and a focus that enabled it to accomplish its Charge with professionalism and dignity.

Although the 1997/1998 Grand Jury has given way to the next group, it is incumbent that certain subject matter be highlighted for future attention:

1. The Newhall Ranch Development address the following impacts before approval:

- a. urban sprawl
- b. channelizing of the Santa Clara River
- c. downstream aquifer pollution
- d. seismic stability
- e. the building of homes on abandoned oil fields

2. Every Redevelopment Project in the county be closely monitored

3. A Civilian review Board be created to monitor law-enforcement misconduct

Finally, it is our fervent hope that officials responsible for evaluating Grand Jury recommendations will do so in a positive and constructive manner. Inasmuch as the Grand Jury is the guardian of the public trust, our only agenda was to make Ventura County a more viable community..





ROBERT C. BRADLEY
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

January 1, 1996 - December 31 1997



CHARLES W. CAMPBELL
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

January, 1 1998 - December 31, 1999

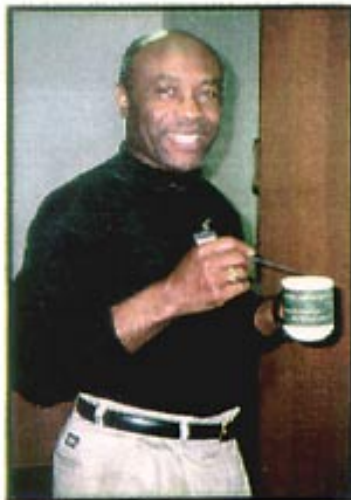
1997/1998 Ventura County Grand Jury Members

Barry Armstrong Librarian 1998	Ventura	District 1
Eldon Bentley	Ojai	District 1
Harold Brooks Treasurer 1997	Oxnard	District 5
Antonio M. Caballero Foreperson Pro Tem 1997	Camarillo	District 3
Ollie Chenevert Recording Secretary 1998	Thousand Oaks	District 3
Bobbie Diehl Corresponding Secretary	Camarillo	District 3
Diane Evans Parliamentarian	Simi Valley	District 4
Edith Everett	Thousand Oaks	District 3
Garda Falt Indictment Secretary	Oxnard	District 5
Joe Hernandez Sergeant-at-Arms 1997	Camarillo	District 3
Bernard Lavin Foreperson Pro Tem 1998	Thousand Oaks	District 2
Edward J. Millan	Camarillo	District 3
Edmund Pizzi	Ventura	District 1
Norbert Rehaut Treasurer 1998	Simi Valley	District 4
Robert Stahl Librarian 1997	Newbury Park	District 2
Donald Thibeault Foreperson	Oxnard	District 5
Lillian Trevisan Board of Supervisors Rep	Newbury Park	District 2
Pablo Vargas Sergeant-at-Arms 1998	Oxnard	District 5
Marsha Weber Recording Secretary 1997	Ventura	District 1

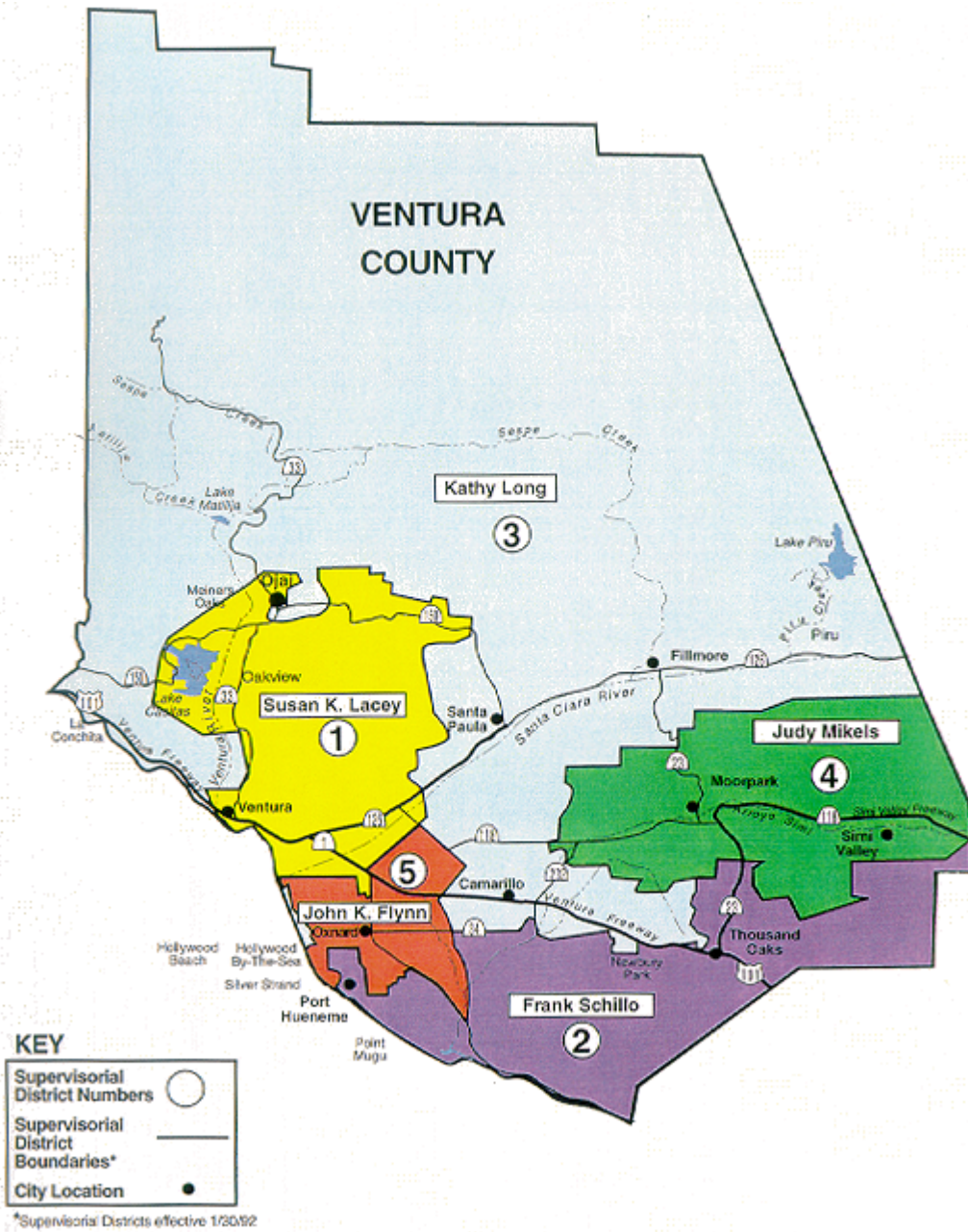


Back row, left to right: Robert Stahl, Lillian Trevisan, Edmund Pizzi, Diane Evans, Harold E. Brooks, Pablo Vargas, Joe Hernandez, Bobbie J. Diehl, Barry Armstrong, Edith Everett, Norbert Rehaut, Eldon Bentley

Front Row, left to right: Ollie Chenevert, Marsha Weber, Antonio M. Caballero, Dr. Donald W. Thibeault, Bernard Lavin, Garda Falt, Edward J. Millan



1998 Grand Jury at work



Supervisorial Districts in Ventura County

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