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## Back-to-back

Long Beach mayor, city councilmembers and other officials reinaugurated during ceremony

Denny Cristales, Online Editor • July 20, 2018 • [Leave a Comment](#)



History repeated itself Tuesday, as the Long Beach mayor and councilmembers who were elected and inaugurated into office four years ago ended their first terms this week by giving their oaths of office during a ceremony outside the Terrace Theater and beginning their second stints in their respective positions.

Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia, 1st District Councilmember Lena Gonzalez, 3rd District Councilmember Suzie Price, 5th District Councilmember Stacy Mungo, 7th District Councilmember Roberto Uranga and 9th District Councilmember Rex Richardson were honored

July 17 and will serve on the city council until 2022.

City Auditor Laura Doud, City Prosecutor Doug Haubert and City Attorney Charles Parkin were also inaugurated into new terms during the oath-of-office ceremony that evening.

Steve Goodling, president and CEO of the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, served as the master of ceremonies for the inauguration event.

Although not part of the ceremony, 6th District Councilmember Dee Andrews went through a slight position change, as he was voted as the city's vice mayor hours earlier during the city council's special meeting.

Andrews is inheriting the position from Richardson, who served in that capacity for two years and was relieved from his duties per the city charter, which states that a new vice mayor should be selected biennially.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra swore in Garcia, who was joined by his fiancé Matthew on the stage.

"You have a mayor who is filled with firsts and bests," Becerra said. "The first Latino mayor in the history of Long Beach, the youngest mayor in the history of Long Beach. [...] We know that only in California, only in America would stories like this be possible. How else would Gabriela Garcia have an opportunity to bring her, I believe, 5-year-old son from Peru and begin a new life and then one day see that little boy become that world-class leader? Only in California, only in America and, I have to say, only in Long Beach, California."

Before Garcia's oath, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti told the crowd he visited from Long Beach's neighboring city to support his "brother mayor."

"In so many ways, our towns are really one place," Garcetti said. "People who live in Long Beach work in the city of Los Angeles, people who live in Los Angeles come here to work every single day. [...] But, these two mayors who, side by side, have the two biggest cities in LA County, have worked together to

eradicate a border that has existed so long between both of our cities. I'm so grateful for your friendship and your leadership."

As Garcia concluded his oath later that evening, the Long Beach mayor took time to thank his supporters and detail some of the city's successes in the last four years, specifically increased development, efficient economy and "green" initiatives.

Garcia said that, citywide, there are 5,000 new homes that are either being completed or approved. He said the average household income in the city is growing faster compared to the entire nation with the exception of 10 cities in the United States.

In addition to his remarks about Long Beach's low unemployment, crime and murder rates and the successes of Measure A and Measure M, the mayor said part of what makes Long Beach a top destination is the people.

"The work that we do is not just putting policies together and moving agendas forward," he said, "it's the work that happens by every one of our city employees that I'm so grateful for."

Gonzalez, placing her hand on the flag of her World War II veteran grandfather, was sworn into her second term as 1st-district councilmember, continuing her family's history of public service. She said her future objectives include digital inclusion, environmentalism, creating partnerships for better compost and recycling options for downtown residents, park programming and better parking.

Gonzalez said her office assisted in creating over 200 new parking spaces in her district and is working on implementing another 100. There will also be a new pilot program for permitted parking in the near future.

During her first term, the City created the first project-labor agreement, eliminated Styrofoam, implemented the Long Beach Equal Values Act and localized the economy by prioritizing small businesses.

Gonzalez also said her district is home to the most affordable housing units in the city, with nearly 1,800.

Price, inaugurated by former Long Beach Mayor Beverly O'Neill, said the next four years will be "a time of great opportunity for our city." Her area of focus will be public safety, she said.

"We have to find and support out-of-the-box ideas to ensure that long-term public-safety solutions remain a high priority for our city," Price said. "As a city, we have serious issues we must face, and we can't confront them with short-sighted political goals, but instead we have to be honest, forthright and work to ensure we're on the right track."

Mungo, inaugurated by her husband Scott Flanigan, said her district will continue to fix broken streets and sidewalks, continue to create jobs and reduce crime to record levels and preserve the "character" of the neighborhoods. In her first term, the Long Beach Exchange— a retail and dining plaza— also completed development.

"In the next four years, we're excited and poised to do even more," she said. "Right now, in partnership with neighborhoods, we are working on a public-private partnership project for our parks. The 5th district tests 70 percent of the city's park's acreage, and we're looking to create opportunities to improve the maintenance and recreational opportunities while creating new and sustainable revenue streams that keep these parks in the conditions by which we expect."

California State Senator Kevin de León inaugurated Uranga into the 7th-council-district position. A longtime friend of Uranga's, de León said it was an honor to swear in "the only councilman in LA County with a Fu Manchu."

Uranga said Measure M has allowed his district to fix more streets and potholes and trim more trees than have ever been done in the past 20 years.

Emphasizing the importance of relationships, such as the ones with de León, his family and residents, Uranga said his connection with those on the city council are equally as important.

"We rely on one another [...]," he said. "Although we might have our own silos, our own little fiefdoms, if you will, in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th, we do work together as a team, and this team this year will stay intact. We were together four years ago, and we're together now."

Richardson, joined by his uncle and wife Nina, remarked how, in such a short period of time, north Long Beach was able to begin the “uptown turnaround.”

With the introduction of new community centers, such as the Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library, the former vice mayor said the 9th district has gone and is still going through revitalization.

“If you think about our neighborhoods, that’s really the core of why Long Beach is special— our unique neighborhoods,” he said. “And, if you think about it, the neighborhoods are more sustainable today, and they’re safer today than they were four years ago.”

While Richardson said he is proud of past successes, he added that it’s time for the City to be honest about certain issues that it can respond to better, specifically the topics of homelessness and housing.

“Today is not about the past; today is truly about the future, and it’s time that we address the proverbial elephant in the room and set out to solve our homelessness and housing crisis in the city of Long Beach,” he said. “As we embark on a new city-council term, I ask our city council to be bold, and let’s take on this issue with the dedication and innovation that it really requires to solve so Long Beach can continue to be a model city.”

He encouraged the community to participate at the city council’s July 24 meeting to discuss housing and homelessness issues.

Doud, also inaugurated by O’Neill, expressed gratitude to her colleagues, her father and her mother, who passed away last year. Doud, serving her fourth term as city auditor after first being elected in 2006, used her mother’s Bible to swear into office.

“I’m honored to be serving this city that I was born in, I grew up in,” she said. “I’m not planning on going anywhere. I’m thankful to be working in a job that I love. I get to come to work each day and feel like I can make a small difference in some way, and I’m looking forward to the future and working with all of you to continue to build and strengthen and serve this wonderful community.”

Haubert, accompanied by Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacy and his wife Lisa, said his intentions this upcoming term are to continue to develop the city’s court-diversion programs that

provide second chances to first-time non-violent offenders and the strategies that keep violent gang members off the streets.

“We’re going to continue to connect those battling addiction or mental illness or both into much needed social services, designed not only to help them personally, but to make all of our neighborhoods safer,” he said. “In fact, stay tuned, because you’ll be hearing how our office, working with the police department in Long Beach, is going to be using technology to connect people to services unlike any community in the United States. You’ll be hearing about that soon, and we’re using locally based Laserfiche software to do that.”

Haubert is serving his third term as prosecutor since first being elected in 2010.

Parkin was also elected to his second term since serving in 2014.

“Thank you all for being here tonight,” the city attorney said. “Your civic engagement is important, and it’s necessary for Long Beach to be the best city it can be. Please stay involved.”