



## **Santa Barbara County Statement Regarding the Sudden Passing of Former Fourth District Supervisor Joni L. Gray**

**Thurs., November 23, 2017**

It is with great sadness that the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors learned of the sudden passing of former Supervisor Joni Gray yesterday. Those who worked with her described her as a dedicated and tireless representative of her district, the county and local governments in Sacramento. She was a courageous public servant who set a high standard for public service.

Gray was appointed in August 1998 by then-Governor Pete Wilson to fill the seat of the Fourth Supervisorial District of Santa Barbara County. She then ran and was elected on November 3, 1998 for a two year term. On March 7, 2000, Gray was re-elected to her first four-year term and went on to serve several terms through 2012. After serving 14 years on the Board, Gray focused on her family law and estate planning practice.

Fifth District Supervisor Steve Lavagnino and Second District Supervisor Janet Wolf served on the Board with Gray and had the following to say.

“Joni was a fascinating woman with North County roots that ran deeper than most,” said Lavagnino. “She embraced the Western lifestyle and was a huge supporter of the Elks Rodeo and FFA. As a huge sports fan, she has been the backbone and driving influence behind the North County Athletic Roundtable that recognizes local high school athletes. I will miss her greatly and hope I can live up to her legacy.”

“I was shocked to hear of Joni’s sudden passing,” added Wolf. “Joni was my colleague on the Board for my first six years as Supervisor. She was very welcoming when I joined the board in 2007, and later encouraged me to take her place on the retirement board where she’d served admirably for many years. She had a quick wit and was extremely smart.”

Wolf went on to say, “Joni was a very thoughtful and compassionate woman. I recall fondly the times I would go to her home for her annual BBQ celebrating the beginning of the Santa Maria rodeo. Joni loved and worked very hard for her community and her passing will be a tremendous loss to all who knew her. I know it will be for me.”

Former Supervisor Gray will be missed by all those who worked with her and those she served. Supervisors and County staff alike send thoughts and deepest sympathies to her family at this time.

###

