



County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

SUPERVISOR MANUEL REQUENA

Term; 1852 - 1853
District: Not Applicable
Date of Birth: 1802
Death: June 27, 1876

Manuel Requena served as county supervisor for one term. He was elected in 1852, the same year the Board of Supervisors was created.

Requena was born in 1802 in Campiето, Mexico, where he grew up and went on to become a successful merchant.

In 1834 he moved to Los Angeles, where he quickly became an important business and political figure for the Mexican government. He served two terms (1836 and 1844) as "alcalde" (equivalent to mayor and justice of the peace) and played an important military role in the bloodless civil wars of California's Mexican-American conflict. When the Americans invaded in 1846, he avoided any involvement in the fighting.

Requena's prominence in the city under Mexican rule carried over to the new American administration. In July 1850, he served as a member of the first common council under the new American charter. He went on to four more consecutive terms on the council, serving most of that time as president. Concurrently, he was elected a member of the first Board of Supervisors of the County when that body was formed in 1852.

In 1856, when the mayor resigned, Requena was appointed acting mayor until a replacement was selected. During his 11-day term as acting mayor, Requena served strictly as a caretaker under the council-mayor form of government for the city of approximately 3,200. He did not run for the mayor's office position, but did continue to be a regular candidate for the Common Council and the Board of Supervisors.

In the early 1850s, he had been a Democrat, but late in that decade he transferred to the new Republican Party. As a Republican in a heavily Democratic city and a Mexican in an increasingly Anglicized city, Requena's political campaigns through the late 1850s and early 1860s were mostly unsuccessful, although he did win a seventh council term in 1864 and an eighth in 1867.

Requena's credits included being the first Mexican-American mayor of Los Angeles; being instrumental in the building of the first public school at Second and Spring Streets; having a street named in his honor, (but which has since been renamed Market Street); and founding the Lincoln-Johnson Club.

After retiring from public office, Requena bought and sold real estate, and raised cattle, oranges and grapes on his many properties.

On June 27, 1876, Requena died. He was a widower and had no children.