



County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors



SUPERVISOR YVONNE B. BURKE

Term: 1979 -80, 1992 – 2008
District: Second
Date of Birth: Oct. 5, 1932

Yvonne Brathwaite Burke was elected to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 1992, replacing retired Supervisor Kenneth Hahn in the Second District. She was re-elected in 1996, 2000, 2004 and retired in 2008. Burke also served a two-year term from 1979 to 1980 when she was appointed to represent the Fourth District after the resignation of James A. Hayes. She was appointed on June 14, 1979, but was defeated in the November 1980 general election by Deane Dana.

A native of Los Angeles, Burke was born on Oct. 5, 1932 to the late James T. and Lola Watson. She graduated from Manual Arts High School, earned an undergraduate degree in political science from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), and a juris doctorate degree from the University of Southern California (USC). She was admitted to the California State Bar in 1956.

She served in the California Assembly from 1966 to 1972. In 1972 she was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, serving the 28th Congressional District. In her congressional capacity she served on the Appropriations Committee, Departments of State, Justice and Commerce Committee, and the Select Committee on Assassinations.

Her major accomplishments as county supervisor included:

- Worked closely with the Department of Children and Family Services to promote the placement of foster children in homes near their original neighborhoods.
- Was instrumental in establishing a number of child care centers that provide supervision, learning enrichment, and nutritious meals.
- Established the Second District Education and Policy Foundation, which provides scholarships to students in the Second District.
- Advanced economic development in the Second District by promoting the establishment of businesses in areas that were previously underserved. The Athens-Westmont business incubator is a state-of-the-art small business center.
- Worked to promote computer ownership and the availability of cyber technology to underserved communities in the Second District.
- Championed parkland improvements that included the beautification of the La Brea Green Belt, a major transportation route, and the expansion of the Kenneth Hahn

Recreational Area to include Little League baseball, golf, and other activities.

- Took the lead in establishing a County archives system.

As a member of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board of Directors, Burke pushed for the development of the Crenshaw Corridor and a light and heavy rail system in addition to the use of buses to reduce traffic congestion and meet the growing public transportation needs.

She was first vice president of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and became president in June 2006.

Credits include being the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Congress from California (1972), and the first to serve as chair of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors (1993). She served as vice chair of the 1972 Democratic National Convention. She is also a past chair of the L.A. Federal Reserve Bank, was vice chairman of the 1984 U.S. Olympics Organizing Committee, and served on boards of numerous prestigious organizations and corporations, including Nestle. In 1971 Burke was named Woman of the Year by the Los Angeles Times, "One of America's 200 Future Leaders" by Time Magazine in 1974, and Alumni of the Year by UCLA in 1996.

After retiring from the Board of Supervisors in December 2008, Burke the following month at age 76 became a mediator with the Alternative Resolution Centers, focusing on state and local regulatory issues, commercial disputes, medical malpractice, labor and employment, land use and environmental law.

Burke is married to William A. Burke, a Los Angeles businessman, and has a daughter, Autumn, and a stepdaughter, Christine Burke.

Sources: Extracted from Burke's official biography.