

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HOLLY J. MITCHELL AND
JANICE HAHN**

November 7, 2023

**Proclaiming November 12 – 19, 2023 as Diane E. Watson Week in Los Angeles
County**

The Honorable Diane Edith Watson, Ph.D. celebrates her 90th birthday on November 12, 2023, and the County of Los Angeles would like to acknowledge and recognize her more than 60 years of public service.

Diane Watson’s path to success began in our local education system as she attended 36th Street Elementary School, Foshay Junior High School, and Dorsey High School. She graduated from Los Angeles City College, California State University at Los Angeles (CSULA), and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and then went on to Claremont Graduate College and Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

She began her life of public service as an elementary school teacher and moved up to become an Assistant Principal. She was also a School Psychologist and served as a Health Education Specialist in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), at UCLA and CSULA. She also served as an international schoolteacher in Japan and France.

Diane Watson was first elected to public office in 1975 when she became the first Black woman elected to the LAUSD School Board. In 1978, she was the first Black woman elected to the California State Senate, where she served on the Senate Judiciary Committee, and as Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee. In the State Senate, Diane Watson authored the California Birth Defects Monitoring Program Act, the Residential Care Facilities Act, and played a key role in the enactment of legislation to

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promote breast cancer research, and other legislation to improve food health safety requirements in restaurants. She served in the State Senate until 1999.

Former President Bill Clinton appointed Diane Watson to serve as the United States (U.S) Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia in 1999. In this role, she was instrumental in stopping the illegal dumping of toxic and radioactive waste in the surrounding oceans.

In 2001, Diane Watson was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. She served on the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform including serving as the Chairwoman of Government Management, Organization, and Procurement. She also served on Congressional Caucuses as Chair of the Congressional Entertainment Industries Caucus, Co-Chair of the Congressional Korea Caucus, Co-Chair of the U.S.- United Kingdom Caucus, and on the Congressional Black Caucus. In Congress, she was a vocal leader on issues related to racism and xenophobia, supporting reparations for descendants of American Slaves, reform of the educational system, subsidies for families lacking health care, and a comprehensive overhaul of the nation's criminal justice system. She also decried incidents of violence and racism against Arab Americans following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Diane Watson has made remarkable contributions to our local communities, the State of California, and our nation. Her impact stretches across politics, authoring legislation, and launching initiatives for the betterment of our citizens with a particularly strong impact on women and people of color. Her impacts can be seen locally and globally as she has inspired many people to seek careers in politics and public service who have gone on to make remarkable contributions and achievements.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Proclaim November 12 – 19, 2023, as Diane E. Watson Week in the County of Los Angeles in celebration of her 90th birthday and in recognition of her many contributions through her years of public service at the local, state, national and international levels.

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