



## NEWS RELEASE

### Board of Supervisors

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## Board names Michelle Blakemore to top legal post

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Michelle Blakemore, a trusted and respected attorney who has served the County for 28 years, was appointed County Counsel by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday.

Blakemore joined the Office of County Counsel in 1989 as a Deputy County Counsel and was promoted to Principal Assistant County Counsel in January 2009. In December 2010, she was named to her current position as Chief Assistant County Counsel.

The Office of County Counsel provides civil legal services to the Board of Supervisors, the County Administrative Office, County departments, commissions, special districts and school districts. County Counsel also provides legal services to various joint powers authorities.

"Michelle has been very effective as Chief Assistant County Counsel," said Robert A. Lovingood, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "Her appointment as County Counsel is well deserved and I know the public will be well served by her integrity, commitment and experience in the law."

The County departments Blakemore has served over the years include Purchasing, Community Development and Housing, the Economic Development Agency, the Redevelopment Agency, Special Districts and the Administrative Office. Blakemore has a strong background in municipal finance, public law and real property transactions.

Curt Hagman, Vice Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, said Blakemore's experience with the County has been marked by unquestioned integrity, hard work and legal brilliance.

"She is extremely knowledgeable and a skillful legal strategist," Hagman said. "Michelle is an up-through-the-ranks success story, and I am proud to support her as our new County Counsel. My colleagues and I will be depending on her for guidance in navigating complex legal issues facing San Bernardino County and I know she will be a tremendous asset for us."

"Michelle is a consummate legal professional, and her breadth of knowledge about the County will be extremely important as we work through complex legal challenges in the years to come," said Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford.

Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales said Blakemore is the perfect choice to lead the Office of County Counsel.

"Her appointment is an excellent example of how succession planning should be exercised, leading to a smoother transition for the department and the legal advisement for our County," Gonzales said. "As a Board we came together on this selection to promote a dedicated, hard-working member of our County family. I am extremely pleased with the process and our choosing Michelle to lead our legal team."

Blakemore graduated cum laude from the University of Southern California, majoring in public affairs with a concentration in public policy. She earned her juris doctorate at the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law. Blakemore began her career in Los Angeles as a public finance attorney specializing in utility, airport and healthcare financing and then on to Philadelphia, where she specialized in hospital financing. Before joining the County, Blakemore spent three years working for an Orange County law firm representing schools.

"With over two decades of serving our county as a legal professional, Ms. Blakemore has my trust and respect to lead us as our new County Counsel," said Third District Supervisor James Ramos. "We are privileged to have a team of a knowledgeable and experienced individuals providing us with sound legal advice. I extend my congratulations to Ms. Blakemore and I look forward to working with her in the future."

Blakemore will lead a staff of about 100 employees, including 53 attorneys. Blakemore begins the job on Nov. 25 following the retirement of County Counsel Jean-Rene Basle.