



# CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COMMISSION

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## STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF COMMISSIONER VERA HAILE, JULY 10, 2014

The San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission and Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs mourn the loss of longtime Commissioner Vera Haile Dalenberg who passed away last evening, July 9, 2014.

Commissioner Haile was a lifelong advocate who challenged the City to do its very best for immigrants, seniors, and all low-income or underserved people. She served on the Commission since its beginning and was considered to be the Commission's oral historian and expert.

"Vera was smart, brave, and full of compassion. I first met her as a young legal services attorney in Chinatown in the 1970s. She was committed to helping the voiceless and underserved communities then, and as we all know, she continued to do so until the very end. She led a life that we should all try to emulate," said IRC Chair Bill Ong Hing, Professor of Law at USF.

A native of Knoxville Tennessee, Commissioner Haile moved to San Francisco after graduating from Antioch College and earned her Master of Social Welfare degree from UC Berkeley. She started her long and distinguished career in social service at Self-Help for the Elderly in San Francisco's Chinatown from 1970-1983, and served as the Executive Director of North of Market Senior Services (now the Curry Senior Center) from 1983-1996, where she helped develop a number of innovative neighborhood-based programs. Retirement only brought more opportunities for leadership. Commissioner Haile served on the Aging and Adult Services Commission from 1999 - 2005, presiding as its President for three years; the Advisory Council to the Aging and Adult Services Department, the Mayor's Long Term Care Coordinating Council, co-chair of the San Francisco In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Task Force, and has been active with the Coalition of Agencies Serving the Elders (CASE) and Planning for Elders, with whom she worked since its inception in 1990.

Earlier this year, Mercy Housing California and the St. Anthony Foundation broke ground on the Vera Haile Elder Residence, located at 121 Golden Gate Avenue in San Francisco's Tenderloin. Named in the Commissioner's honor, the Residence is a new 10-story apartment community featuring 90 affordable rental apartment homes for low-income seniors. The building is also the location of the St. Anthony Dining Room, Social Work Center and Free Clothing Program.

The IRC will be naming an annual award in Commissioner Haile's memory later this year. "Commissioner Haile was a trusted and respected member of the Commission and will be greatly missed," stated IRC Vice Chair Celine Kennelly, Executive Director of the Irish Immigrant Pastoral Center.

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