

June 13, 2012
Agenda Item 13c

Dan Borenstein: Amgen Tour was a celebration of community in the East Bay

By Daniel Borenstein Staff columnist Contra Costa Times
Posted:

Saturday, May 19, 2012
ContraCostaTimes.com

Like pilgrims headed for their special mecca, thousands of amateur riders pedaled up Mount Diablo, the region's premier riding destination. Conquer the devil's mountain, and you can call yourself a serious cyclist.

They came not only to watch the race but to be with their people, to show off their bikes and colorful jerseys from clubs near and far, like peacocks spreading their feathers. For the serious cyclist, this is not just a form of exercise -- it's a lifestyle.

For hours before the early-afternoon arrival of the professional riders, the serious amateurs ascended the mountain, staking out prime locations with views of the twisting road below so they could watch across the ravines as the pro competitors headed their way.

At the junction, halfway up Mount Diablo where the two roads in the state park converge, the community partied. On a typical weekend, this is where cyclists stop for water and a snack before continuing their climb to the top. On Tuesday, it was the premier congregation point, with riders abuzz in anticipation of an international event that would recognize the majestic beauty of their mountain.

At the bottom of the hill, residents of the posh community of Diablo cheered when the Amgen tour finally passed through, four in the lead group, most of the riders seven minutes later.

Each group swept by in a matter of seconds. Some of the world's best cyclists rode up Mount Diablo Scenic Boulevard (it may be many things, but it's not a boulevard), over the new blacktop, oblivious to the street's horrendous condition just a few months ago, unaware of the political machinations in Contra Costa and Sacramento that led to the repairs in anticipation of their arrival.

Thanks to the new pavement, the focus was on the mountain, on the views far into the distance and the stunning hillsides, rather than the crumbling roadway that likely would have been the source of an accident watched around the world. This was a cycling celebration rather than an international embarrassment.

After the tour had come and gone, the riders began their descent. One pack after another after another, rolling through Diablo, descending slowly because of the swarm of riders. It was a caution that, frankly, is often lacking on the mountain.

Just last weekend, at least two riders crashed on descents. One was taken out by ambulance. The other walked away, dizzy and dazed. Both left behind cracked helmets.

As an avid rider, this is the part of cycling that concerns me the most. I'm a slow descender. I don't trust myself, and I know there are many factors I can't control. I watch friends blaze downhill. I know how little it takes to send them flying off their bikes: a patch of gravel, a crack in the pavement or a flat tire. I worry about the day I'll have to watch one of them carried away. I hope it's not me.

And then there are the car drivers on the mountain, oblivious to the dangers they create when they pass climbing cyclists by crossing the center line with a curve approaching, indifferent to the bike riders they force to squeeze toward the shoulder.

On this day, however, most drivers and cyclists were behaving cautiously and responsibly. No one wanted to

spoil the moment. The energy of the event, the beauty of the mountain, the clarity of the sky -- it all made for a special celebration.

Sure, the Amgen tour was great. But the sense of community was so much more than that.

Daniel Borenstein is a staff columnist, editorial writer and avid cyclist. Reach him at 925-943-8248 or dborenstein@bayareanewsgroup.com. Follow him at [Twitter.com/borensteindan](https://twitter.com/borensteindan).

Contra Costa Times editorial: East County fire tax is irresponsible and should be rejected

*Contra Costa Times editorial © Copyright 2011, Bay Area News Group Contra Costa Times
Posted:*

Monday, May 21, 2012
ContraCostaTimes.com

The newly independent East Contra Costa Fire Protection District, once controlled by the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors, has been run by local representatives for two years. The transition came as district revenues were plummeting because of declining property tax revenues.

Whereas the district -- serving Brentwood, Oakley, Bethel Island, Discovery Bay, Knightsen, Byron, Marsh Creek and Morgan Territory -- collected \$12.2 million in 2007-08, it's expecting just \$7.7 million from property taxes in fiscal year 2012-13. Before 2010, the district was staffing eight stations. Next year, it could be down to three.

Clearly, the district needs money. However, Measure S on the June 5 ballot is not the answer.

The proposed 10-year tax, starting at \$197 per parcel and increasing to as much as \$257 annually, demonstrates no fiscal discipline and fails to address out-of-control retirement costs.

Let's understand the size of the proposal. Measure S would raise \$8.6 million the first year, more than doubling the district's income. That would not only restore the district to its peak revenue level of five years ago, it would add 40 percent.

This tax would become the district's primary income source. In 10 years, residents would face enormous pressure to renew it. Thus, Measure S essentially would be a permanent increase.

Rather than address the underlying fiscal crisis, the district proposes to irresponsibly add paramedic services and increase staffing. At least one firefighter on every engine would be a paramedic.

District officials have done no cost-benefit analysis of this. The district's polling shows that paramedics are not a top community priority. Adding paramedics would increase salary costs -- and exacerbate the district's retirement cost problem.

The district's pension and retiree health care plans already are underfunded by \$29 million -- a debt equal to nearly four years of current district property tax revenues.

Pension costs currently add 79 cents to every dollar of payroll. That will reach 98 cents by 2014-15, even if the district does not add paramedics.

The district projects that costs for promised retiree health benefits will increase from about 9 percent of payroll this year to roughly 35 percent a decade from now.

In other words, district officials know they will be spending far more on retirement benefits than on salaries. That's unsustainable and inexcusable. Yet, Measure S does not confront the problem.

Before placing the ballot measure before voters, the district and firefighters should have negotiated substantial labor contract changes to reduce retirement costs for existing employees and trim benefits for new workers.

Instead, they have simply postponed contract negotiations until after the election, hoping there will then be more tax money to play with. If voters approve Measure S, that will temporarily remove pressure to rein in these huge costs but won't solve the underlying crisis.

The district should try again. But first: Develop a binding plan that responsibly addresses retirement debts and future costs. Put language in the ballot measure to ensure the savings can't be undone. And make do with a smaller tax.

Then let's talk.

AMGEN TOUR OF CALIFORNIA

Mount Diablo return likely

Tuesday, May 22, 2012
Contra Costa Times

Director says 'good chance' race will come back to area

By Denis Cuff

dcuff@bayareanewsgroup.com

The first visit to Mount Diablo by American's most prestigious bike race attracted thousands of fans and favorable reviews — so much so, that it looks like the Amgen Tour of California could return to this iconic slope. The May 15 crowds were so big, enthusiastic and well managed that there is a “good chance” the race could come back to Mt. Diablo State Park, the Amgen race director said. “The community was very supportive. If they want us back, we would consider it,” said Jim Birrell, director of the Amgen Tour of California. “It was great to have such a dramatic climb early in the race.” On day three of the eight-day race, bikers made up a race route that climbed nearly 2,200 feet up the 3,848-foot mountain challenged the pro racers athletically and state park operators logistically.

The only two roads into the park near Danville and Walnut Creek are steep, narrow and winding — the type of difficult rural course familiar to Tour de France fans but not most American cycling fans.

Still, Roland Gaebert, the Mt. Diablo park superintendent, said the race went well.

“We would like to have the race come back,” Gaebert said. “Mount Diablo is such an iconic place for cycling.” Gaebert said perhaps 7,000 to 10,000 fans watched the race inside or just outside the state park, though no one has a precise count. Perhaps as many as 1,000 cyclists watched from the race high point — the Junction ranger station — where cyclists began their descent, race fans estimated.

Park officials estimate that 7,000 people entered park entrance road gates and hundreds or perhaps thousands of others watched the race from outside the gates or entered the park on foot or with mountain bikes on dirt trails, Gaebert said.

“People were well behaved,” he said. “They even took out their own trash.”

Gaebert and some cycling fans agreed more could have been done to slow down cars and bicyclists speeding downhill after the race.

“A few announcements and maybe warning signs would have helped,” said Geoff Landon, a Danville cyclist and amateur racer. “There was a bit too many cars passing bikes and way too many bikes passing cars on the way out for my taste.”

Gaebert said park rangers and volunteers made efforts to slow down the descending cars and cyclists, but he added that more might be done if the race returns.

Installing speed bumps at entry kiosks might help, he added.

“It’s a learning experience doing this the first time,” Gaebert said. “We’re conducting a review to see if there are things we can do better.”

Two people skinned their knees in spills from bicycles, but no race fans were seriously injured, he added.

Long after the race was over last Tuesday, two park visitors were injured when their vehicle skidded off a park road and rolled down a hill. The passenger was airlifted to a hospital with injuries that weren’t life-threatening, park officials said.

Race fans grumbled that bathrooms at the Junction ranger station were closed to the hundreds of people there.

The restroom capacity was overwhelmed by the crowds, Gaebert said, and chemical toilets likely would be trucked in if Amgen returns.

Contact Denis Cuff at 925-943-8267.



KARL MONDON/STAFFARCHIVES

Big, enthusiastic crowds went to see the Amgen Tour of California peloton at Mount Diablo on May 15.

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Friday, June 1, 2012

Health care district reforms on hold

Assembly won't consider imposing spending restrictions until next year

By: [Jennifer Gollan](#)

An effort to impose spending restrictions on California's taxpayer-funded health care districts is on hold until next year.

[Assemblyman Rich Gordon](#), D-Menlo Park, said he plans to introduce a bill in January requiring more transparency and more accountability from those districts. The new legislation would mandate how much tax revenue districts must spend on community health care programs.

The state's 74 health care districts were created to provide medical care to low-income and rural communities, but a recent Bay Citizen investigation found about 30 of those districts no longer run hospitals. Instead, some districts are managing real estate, stockpiling cash and pouring millions of taxpayer dollars into dubious projects at the expense of community health care programs.

Gordon had co-sponsored legislation earlier this year requiring those districts to spend at least 95 percent of their annual tax revenue on community health programs and to submit detailed financial reports to local oversight agencies.

But lawmakers failed to take action on his bill last week, after some Assembly members said that some districts could not afford to comply with the bill's reporting requirements. The Assembly Appropriations Committee had estimated those requirements would cost districts more than \$100,000.

The lawmakers who opposed the bill were in session yesterday and unavailable for comment.

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Gordon said he would consider ways to bring down those costs before he introduces his new bill.

"It gives us an opportunity to say how can we make this bill better," said Gordon, who co-authored the legislation with [Assemblyman Roger Dickinson](#), D-Sacramento. "I remain concerned that health care districts, particularly those that are no longer running hospitals, should guarantee that tax dollars are being well spent."

Supporters of Gordon's bill were disappointed that lawmakers chose not to vote on his legislation.

“It’s unfortunate,” said Anthony Wright, executive director of Health Access California, a nonprofit health advocacy organization based in Sacramento. “It was a common sense reform. The bill that was introduced was reflective of new scrutiny that is on these districts. We hope that legislators will continue to look at this issue, especially as the state continues to make very tough cuts.”

Contra Costa Supervisor Gayle Uilkema dies following bout with cancer

By Matthias Gafni Contra Costa Times Contra Costa Times

Posted:

Sunday, May 20, 2012

ContraCostaTimes.com

Contra Costa County Supervisor Gayle Uilkema died Saturday morning with her family beside her as she lost her two-year battle with ovarian cancer.

She was 73.

Uilkema, who had served 16 years on the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and 19 years on the Lafayette City Council, planned to retire from public service at the end of the year. As her illness progressed, she had begun missing meetings in December before announcing earlier this year she would not seek re-election.

In March, she was celebrated and named Lafayette Citizen of the Year while overcoming a bout of pneumonia. She spoke about her health.

"That is all you can do, continue to work and follow the doctor's instructions," she said. "The most disappointing thing is you have to miss meetings. I enjoy the meetings. That's where all the ideas start growing, but of course people have been very understanding about it and very supportive about it."

The four-term supervisor has sat through her fair share of meetings.

"Ever since the third grade, I was involved in some kind of student government," Uilkema, a grandmother of three, said after receiving her honor in March. "I always realized that was the most important level, at the ground level."

Originally from Detroit, Uilkema studied vocational education at the University of Michigan before starting a family and moving to the Bay Area. Once in Lafayette, she grew concerned about the lack of recreation classes for her two young daughters.

She was appointed to the recreation commission, soon becoming chairwoman, and noticed a dearth of female leaders in the community.

"I was living in an area that was growing, and subdivisions were going up left and right, but I noticed that all the decision-making bodies were all male," she said. "The school board was male, the City Council was all male and any other groups I saw, church groups, were all male. I thought, 'Hmm, nobody seemed to be bothered by that.' But I was bothered by it.

"I was always looking for what is my life's goal. Maybe mine is to make social change."

Uilkema was elected to the Lafayette City Council in 1978, serving five terms as well as four stints as mayor.

In 1996, she was elected to a supervisor post, serving Central Contra Costa. She was instrumental in finalizing the Lafayette Library and Learning Center and the Veterans Memorial Building in that city.

As part of her county post, she served 15 years on the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and on the powerful Local Agency Formation Commission. She has taught graduate courses at UC Berkeley and Cal State East Bay.

In her decades of service, Uilkema preferred to stay in Contra Costa.

"Even to this day, I have been asked, 'Would I run for state Assembly and other offices?' " she said in March. "I always said 'no,' because local government is the most important government. I've lived that creed, and it has been very rewarding to me."

A rosary service will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday at St. Perpetua Church, 3454 Hamlin Road in Lafayette. A funeral Mass is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. Thursday at the same church with a reception following.

Flowers can be sent to Hull's, 1139 Saranap Ave., Walnut Creek, CA 94595. Memorial donations can be sent to the American Cancer Society, 101 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Gayle Uilkema, East Bay supervisor, dies at 73

Carolyn Jones

Tuesday, May 22, 2012

Services are scheduled for Thursday for Contra Costa County Supervisor Gayle Uilkema, a crusader for small businesses, clean air and responsible government who died May 19 of ovarian cancer. She was 73.

Supervisor Uilkema was finishing her fourth term on the board, following 19 years on the Lafayette City Council. She also served on several regional boards.

"Once we had a very contentious meeting on the Lafayette City Council about a tax, and she changed her vote. She said, 'Always trust the people,' " said Don Tatzin, a Lafayette city councilman who worked with Supervisor Uilkema for decades. "She believed her constituents were smart, caring and knew what was best. And she listened to them."

Supervisor Uilkema grew up in Detroit and attended the [University](#) of Michigan on a full scholarship. In the early 1960s she moved to the Bay Area, where she taught typing and shorthand at Oakland Technical High School.

In the early 1970s she moved to Lafayette, where she raised her two daughters and became involved in local parks and school committees. In 1977 she was elected to the council, serving four terms as mayor while also earning her master's degree in public administration from California State University East Bay.

In 1996, voters elected her to represent District 2 on the Board of Supervisors, a diverse district that for many years included suburban, wealthier cities like San Ramon and Danville as well as more industrial and urban towns in the western side of the county.

"She always dressed very elegantly and treated everyone the same, no matter if they lived in Blackhawk or a shack in Richmond," said her senior aide, Lauri Byers. "She worked hard for everyone."

Supervisor Uilkema, a Republican, was known for her diligent preparation for meetings and insistence on transparent, thoroughly audited budgets.

She also had a surprising sense of humor, said Julie Enea, deputy county administrator.

When she wasn't working, Supervisor Uilkema enjoyed tennis, spending time with her family and gardening at her home of 40 years in Lafayette. She was also active in the Catholic Church, serving as one of the first female lectors in the Bay Area.

She was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in the summer of 2010 but continued working until about two weeks ago, Byers said.



A funeral Mass will be held at 10:30 a.m. Thursday at St. Perpetua's Catholic Church, 3445 Hamlin Road, Lafayette.

Donations can be sent to the American Cancer Society, 101 Ygnacio Valley Road, Suite 110, Walnut Creek, CA 94596, or Stand for Families Free of Violence, 1410 Danzig Plaza, Suite 100, Concord, CA 94520.

Carolyn Jones is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. E-mail: carolynjones@sfchronicle.com

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2012/05/22/BAIL10LDMN.DTL>

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Late Contra Costa supervisor lauded for her devotion to the county

By Lisa Vorderbrueggen Contra Costa Times San Jose Mercury News
Posted:

Wednesday, May 23, 2012
ContraCostaTimes.com

Her colleagues called her "The Queen."

The regal Contra Costa County Supervisor Gayle Uilkema, who died Saturday at age 73 after losing a two-year fight with ovarian cancer, was unfailingly gracious, always impeccably dressed and loved ceremonies.

She could also be imperious, and top staffers at several agencies where she governed during her 34 years in office described her as occasionally "high-maintenance."

Even Uilkema once joked, "They don't call me Queen for nothing."

The community will say their goodbyes Thursday at the funeral in Lafayette of one of the county's most enduring public figures.

Elected to the Lafayette City Council in 1978 and the Board of Supervisors in 1996, Uilkema sat on many local and regional policy boards. Notably, she was a founding member of County Connection transit agency, where she remained on its board until her death.

She may be best remembered for her ubiquitous presence meant as a show of support at the countless "citizen of the year" dinners, ribbon-cuttings and other community events.

"It was her life," said her daughter, Lynn. "Even when she was sick and housebound, she was listening to hearings in her bedroom and calling her office. Right to the end, public service was very important to her."

Uilkema unwittingly launched her public career in the early 1970s. Frustrated when she couldn't find a ballet class in Lafayette for her young daughters where they could dance in colorful butterfly costumes, she got involved in the city's park and recreation commission.

In retrospect, her political trajectory was an obvious path for the bright woman who was a self-admitted public policy addict.

Born in Detroit in 1938, Uilkema entered the University of Michigan on a full scholarship at age 16.

She came to California in the 1960s and taught typing and shorthand at Oakland Technical High School until her children were born. She and her husband, John, divorced in an ugly split in 1990.

"For many people, a situation like hers would have been crippling," said the late supervisor's sorority sister Beverly Wyllie, who described her friend as a role model for women. "But not Gayle. She simply picked herself up by her bootstraps. It never defined her."

While serving on the Lafayette council, Uilkema had earned her master's in public administration. She parlayed her education into university teaching posts.

With Wyllie's help, Uilkema won her first and only competitive county supervisor race in 1996. She took to the job like a duck to water.

"She was the grand dame of the board," said Contra Costa Assessor Gus Kramer. "Gayle loved her job, and

loved being out in the community and talking about the issues."

Uilkema advocated for many issues, including a common East Bay emergency responders' radio system, mammograms for the poor and programs to help the elderly track medications.

A lifelong Republican, she stood her ground against withering criticism of her support for a ban on 50-caliber rifles and a taxpayer-funded girls' residential treatment center.

She even voted to ban smoking at outdoor restaurants in the county, a habit she practiced herself at the time.

"Gayle could surprise you," said Supervisor John Gioia of Richmond, who served with her for the past 16 years. "But she was typically very cautious. She saw policy in terms of incremental change."

Her colleagues often chafed under her process-oriented style. Her detractors point to her lack of solo policy initiatives during her long career.

But those were her strengths, countered retired Contra Costa Sheriff Warren Rupf.

The pair sparred over the sheriff's helicopter program -- he wanted it, she didn't -- but were strong allies. She helped him establish the county's first public safety liaison committee between a city and his agency.

"At times, her focus on process was frustrating, but it was proper," Rupf said. "She did the critical business of local government instead of creating another law and taking credit for it."

Beyond Uilkema's public persona, say those close to her, was a woman who loved dogs, spoiled her grandchildren and scoured thrift shops.

She was a color analysis devotee -- her season was "autumn," as reflected by the fall hues of her enviable wardrobe, jewelry and shoe collection.

The slim woman was also a home improvement maven and gardener who painted her own house, personally placed paver stones paths in her yard and wielded a chain saw as easily as a pen.

But nearly everyone mentions her countless acts of kindness -- handwritten notes, calls of encouragement or small donations. Her chief of staff of nine years, Steve Dexter, called his boss a stateswoman who genuinely wanted to acknowledge and celebrate people's accomplishments.

Uilkema was generous with her time, too.

Martinez Mayor Rob Schroder, who served with the supervisor on several boards, recalls when Uilkema sat in 2008 with his late wife, Carole, during her lengthy chemotherapy treatments.

"I will always remember Gayle for that," Schroder said. "Public service was her life, and she lived it."

Contact Lisa Vorderbrueggen at 925-945-4773, lvorderbrueggen@bayareanewsgroup.com, www.ibabuzz.com/politics or at [Twitter.com/lvorderbrueggen](https://twitter.com/lvorderbrueggen).

remembering gayle uilkema

Rosary service -- 7 p.m. on Wednesday at St. Perpetua Church, 3454 Hamlin Road in Lafayette.
Funeral Mass -- 10:30 a.m. Thursday at the same church with a reception following.
Flowers -- Please send to Hull's, 1139 Saranap Ave., Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

Memorial donations -- American Cancer Society, 101 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Online memory book -- www.ContraCostaTimes.com

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Published May 23rd, 2012

Supervisor Gayle Uilkema Loses Battle with Cancer Services to be held at St. Perpetua's in Lafayette



Gayle Uilkema in Orinda's 4th of July Parade last summer. Photo Ohlen Alexander

service is the manner in which she serves. She is always accessible, puts the needs of constituents first, and trusts the judgment of citizens to know what is best for them and what they need and want from government."

Uilkema took an active interest in a variety of projects ranging from regional emergency preparedness to public finance, and keeping seniors safe from fall risks.

She is survived by her two daughters, of whom she spoke proudly on many occasions-one is a Deputy District Attorney and the other a family practice physician.

Services will be held at Saint Perpetua's Church, 3454 Hamlin Road, Lafayette. There will be a Rosary on Wednesday, May 23 at 7 p.m. and a Funeral Mass on Thursday, May 24 at 10:30 a.m. A reception will follow in St. Perpetua's Parish Hall.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Cancer Society, 101 Ygnacio Valley Road, Suite 110, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Flowers may be sent to Hull's, 1139 Saranap Avenue, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

L.Borrowman

Contra Costa Supervisor Gayle Uilkema passed away Saturday, May 19 after a two-year battle with ovarian cancer. She was 73.

In March, Uilkema was named Lafayette's Citizen of the Year. She served for 16 years on the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and 19 years on the Lafayette City Council. She always believed that local government is the most important government.

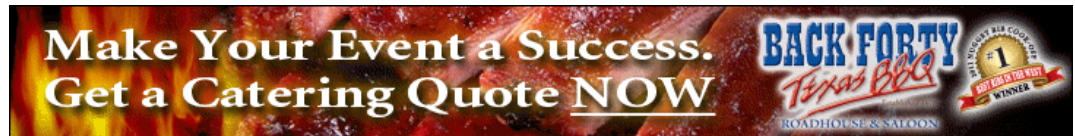
Uilkema announced last November that she would not seek reelection, saying, "I chose this time of Thanksgiving to announce my retirement because I'm so grateful and want to give thanks for the opportunity to hold the public trust all these years."

"Gayle's service to the residents of Lafayette and Contra Costa County goes beyond the number of meetings she attended and the decisions she made," said long-time friend and Lafayette City Council member Don Tatzin in March. "What distinguishes Gayle from others in public

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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Former Supervisor Succumbs To Cancer

Tuesday May 22, 2012

Local News



Contra Costa County Supervisor Gayle Uilkema, who until this year represented Martinez on the Board of Supervisors since 1996, and who had announced her plans to end her three-decades-long political career at the end of her term in January 2013, has passed away after a long battle with cancer.

A service in her memory will be held Thursday at 10:30 a.m. at St. Perpetua Church in Lafayette.

Uilkema, who served for 19 years as a Lafayette City Council member with four terms as mayor of that city, said earlier this year she simply felt it was time to leave office, though friends and those close to her knew she was fighting the effects of ovarian cancer.

"I've been very privileged to have public support for over 30 years, and I'm grateful to the public for their faith in me," Uilkema said at the time. "I felt that it was important to let people know so that we can have a spirited election."

Uilkema spent her last months in office focused on pet public safety projects including a mobile identification system that will allow police to identify suspects in the field and an enhanced inter-agency communication system for local police and fire departments.

Uilkema has represented the Martinez area for most of her supervisorial career. She is the mother of two grown daughters, one of whom is a Deputy District Attorney and the other is a family practice physician in San Diego.

Originally from Detroit, Uilkema was a vocational education major at the University of Michigan when she moved her young family to Lafayette, serving on city commissions before winning a seat on the City Council in 1978.

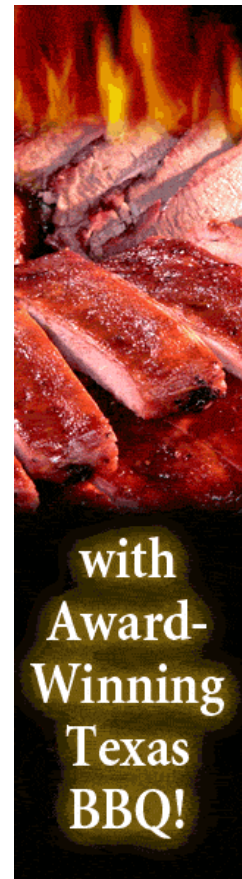
She was elected to the first of four terms on the board of supervisors representing District 2, which until this year included Martinez, in 1996. The new district includes Lafayette, Moraga, Danville and Walnut Creek.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was originally published May 20, 2012, by [martinez.patch.com](#).

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Weather in Martinez

Current Forecast
 Wed, 23 May 2012 2:52 pm PDT

Fair **77°F** High: 75°F Low: 52°F
 Tomorrow Sunny/Wind

WINDY
 Sunrise 5:50 am
 Sunset 8:19 pm
 Wind: 14 mph
 Humidity: 28 %
 Visibility: 10 mi
 Barometer: 29.92 in
FALLING
 74°F / 50°F

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