

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, April 25, 2025

# Mayor Todd Gloria Announces New Appointments to City of San Diego's Boards and Commissions

## 42 APPOINTEES CONFIRMED ACROSS 13 DIFFERENT BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

SAN DIEGO – Dozens of new and familiar faces are joining the City of San Diego's Boards and Commissions. Following City Council approval, Mayor Todd Gloria recently announced these new appointments and reappointments to serve in key roles on the City's Boards and Commissions. Check the [Boards and Commissions webpage](#) to learn about vacancies and apply for a position.

**Eva Friedberg** was appointed to the Historical Resources Board. She serves as President of Evari GIS Consulting. She is qualified as an Architectural Historian by the Secretary of the Interior standards and heads Evari's historic resource consulting arm. Previously, Friedberg served as adjunct faculty at both Woodbury University and the University of San Diego (USD), where she taught courses in architectural history, urban studies and landscape theory. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California (UC), Berkeley, a Master of Arts and a doctorate degree in visual studies from UC, Irvine. Friedberg is being appointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Architectural Historian Seat. Her appointment replaces Dr. Ann Woods, whose term has expired.

**Dr. Michael Provence**, a professor in the history department at UC San Diego, was appointed to the Historical Resources Board. He holds a doctorate degree in modern Middle Eastern history from the University of Chicago and is being appointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2026, in a General Member Seat. His appointment replaces Matthew Winter, whose term has expired.

**Melissa Sofia** was appointed to the Historical Resources Board. She has served as a realtor for over 20 years and is the founder of The Avenue Home Collective. She is the Vice-President of the Asian Real Estate Association of America and helped create a \$10,000 homeowner grant for first-time buying families. She is being appointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2026, in a General Member Seat. Her appointment replaces Tim Hutter, whose term has expired.

**Melanie Woods** was appointed to the Historical Resources Board. She is Vice President of Local Public Affairs for the California Apartment Association, with extensive experience in land use and urban planning. She has worked at the intersection of government, business and community interests to advance thoughtful development and economic growth. Previously, Woods served as Director of Workforce Programs at the San Diego Workforce Partnership, where she managed a \$4 million budget, launched innovative workforce initiatives and secured over \$1 million in funding to support job training programs. She serves as Chair of the Scripps Ranch Civic Association and is involved with the Downtown San Diego Partnership, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce and Asian Business Association. Woods holds a Master of Public Administration and a bachelor's in economics and political science from San Diego State University (SDSU). She is being appointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2026, in a General Member Seat. Her appointment replaces Courtney Coyle, whose term has expired.

**Carla Farley** was reappointed to the Historical Resources Board. She is the immediate past President of the Greater San Diego Association of REALTORS®, becoming the first African American woman to hold the position of President in the organization's 141 years. She is the broker, owner and President of Corban Realty Group Inc., a full-service sales and property management brokerage, she has served San Diego for more than 27 years. Through her studies at San Diego City College (SDCC) and Universal Accounting College, she worked in nursing and the accounting fields and with the Military Communications Center before entering the real estate industry. Farley is being reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in a General Member Seat.

**Joy Miller** was reappointed to the Historical Resources Board. She is a doctoral student in history at UC, San Diego. She received her Master of Arts in history, with a digital history concentration, and a Bachelor of Arts in history from California State University, San Marcos. She is being reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Historical Professional Seat.

**Michael Taylor** was reappointed to the Historical Resources Board. He is an archaeologist and President of NWB Environmental Services, LLC, a cultural resources management firm specializing in various archaeological services, including Federal Aviation Administration-compliant aerial services using drones. He is also the President of NWB Imaging, a cinematic film production company where he functions as a filmmaker, producer, writer and director whose shows can be seen on KPBS. Taylor is a Marine veteran and a SDCC alumnus, with an associate degree in anthropological archaeology and a Bachelor of Arts in anthropological archaeology from Columbia University. Taylor is being reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027.

**Mark Jones** was appointed to the Citizens Equal Opportunity Commission. He served on the Citizens Advisory Council for SDCC, where he provided strategic guidance to enhance student success, accessibility and institutional development. As a trustee for the SDCC District, he played a vital role in shaping policies that impact thousands of students, ensuring that higher education remains accessible, affordable and inclusive. Additionally, he served as a trustee for Bayview Baptist Church, where he helped

lead initiatives that support spiritual growth, social justice and community outreach. Jones holds a Bachelor of Arts in communication from USD and is a LEAD San Diego alumnus. He is being appointed to a two-year term ending Jan. 1, 2027, in the City At-Large Seat.

**Judith Eisenberg** was appointed to the Consolidated Plan Advisory Board. She is a nonprofit professional with over two decades of experience in the field. She serves as an Operations Administrator for Kiwanis Club San Diego, where she manages events, oversees member communications, creates digital content and curates a monthly newsletter. Additionally, she serves as the Director of Volunteers at Wee Companions Small Animal Rescue. Eisenberg holds a bachelor's degree in mathematical and computational sciences from Stanford University and is earning a master's degree in nonprofit leadership from USD. She is being appointed to a two-year term ending July 1, 2025, in the District 1 Representative Seat.

**Sitara Sethi** was reappointed to the Board of Library Commissioners. She is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the San Diego Imperial Counties Developmental Services Foundation and has over 20 years of experience leading nonprofit program development and evaluation. She holds a Master of Science in psychosocial rehabilitation from India. Sethi is being appointed to a two-year term, ending March 1, 2027, in the District 6 Representative Seat.

**Dr. Wendy Ranck-Buhr** was reappointed to the Board of Library Commissioners. She has over 30 years of experience in education. She is an Instructional Support Officer for the San Diego Unified School District. She earned her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees at SDSU and completed her doctoral degree at Claremont Graduate University and SDSU. She is being reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the San Diego Unified School District Representative Seat.

**Dr. Andrea Dooley** was reappointed to the Parks and Recreation Board. She is the Assistant Dean of Education Administration for the division of medical education at UC, San Diego School of Medicine. Prior to this, she served as the Senior Associate Vice President for Student Affairs at SDSU and the Assistant Vice Chancellor and Chief of Staff for the division of student affairs at UC, Berkeley. She holds a bachelor's degree in social science, a master's degree in education with an emphasis in postsecondary leadership and a doctoral degree in educational leadership from SDSU. She is being reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027.

**Agatha Wein** was reappointed to the Parks and Recreation Board. She is an accomplished outreach and engagement professional with a technical background in geoscience and over 15 years of experience in public engagement on energy and climate policy. She recently served as a Local Government and Community Liaison at the California Public Utilities Commission, where she led local engagement and community participation efforts in the southern California border region. Wein holds a Bachelor of Science in earth sciences and physics from UC, San Diego and a Master of Science in geophysics from UC, San Diego. She is being reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Expert Seat.

**Allison Soares** was reappointed to the Parks and Recreation Board. She is a partner at Vanst Law LLP, where she provides information to clients regarding avoidance or resolution of tax problems with federal, state and local taxing authorities. She has represented hundreds of individuals and entities before the Internal Revenue Services, Franchise Tax Board, Employment Development Department and the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration. In addition to having a Jurist Doctorate and Master of Laws in Taxation, Soares has a Master of Business Administration in forensic accounting. She is being reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Parks and Recreation Board Chair Seat.

**Evelyn Smith** was reappointed to the Parks and Recreation Board. She was employed with the San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau for 21 years. She currently serves as the Emerald Hills Neighborhood Council Chair, Elementary Institute of Science Supportive Member and formerly a Girl Scout Troop Leader. Additionally, she serves as a Groundwork San Diego – Chollas Creek Board Member, Chairs the Encanto Parks and Recreation Board and General Member of the Chollas Planning Committee. She attended Miles College in Birmingham, Alabama, where she received a Bachelor of Science in education. Smith is being reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Member Seat.

**Juan Carlos Garcia** was appointed to the International Affairs Board. He is the Public Relations and External Affairs Director at Cross Border Xpress. He has 18 years of public service experience in foreign affairs, international development cooperation, government relations, community engagement and higher education. He is being appointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2026, in the Qualified County Resident Seat. He will be replacing Karen Higareda, who resigned.

**Johanne Gnagne** was appointed to the International Affairs Board. She serves as a Project Manager of Clinical Services and Fiscal Affairs at UC San Diego Health and Sciences International. She is also the founder of Klamon & Co., where she infuses her project management expertise into curating events and educational programming to redefine African cultural representation, fueled by her experiences being raised in Montreal and Cote d'Ivoire. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in finance from the Universite du Quebec A Montreal and a Master of Science with a concentration in international business from the Universite de Sherbrooke, Quebec. Gnagne is being appointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Civic Organization.

**Scott Tait** was appointed to the International Affairs Board. He is the Executive Director of the National Security Innovation Catalyst located at UC San Diego, where they improve the transition of innovative commercial technology to national security users, help to transition research and innovation via commercialization and provide practical, effective policy recommendations to improve U.S. national security effectiveness. In addition to his leadership of Catalyst, Tait is Chief Operating Officer and Director of Strategic Partnerships at Startup Science, which provides a comprehensive platform that supports entrepreneurs from ideation to exit. He holds a master's degree from Stanford University in international policy and economics and the U.S. Naval War College in national security and strategic studies. He is also



a graduate of the Columbia University Business School's executive program in venture capital, private equity and mergers and acquisitions. Tait was appointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Qualified County Resident Seat.

**Richard Bainter** was reappointed to the International Affairs Board. He has been an attorney in private practice since 2010. He provides mediation and arbitration services to international organizations, non-profits and small businesses on matters related to international law and government relations. Additionally, he serves as the outside legal counsel to the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia. He was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Qualified County Resident Seat.

**Dennis Michael Broussard** was reappointed to the International Affairs Board. He is a consultant, event producer, entrepreneur and humanitarian. He volunteers on the USS Midway Museum's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the Japanese Friendship Garden's Cultural and Diversity Committee, the Philippine Honorary Consulate of San Diego Board of Advisors, the San Diego International Sister Cities Association Board of Directors and the San Diego World Affairs Council as Marketing Chair. In 2014, he founded The Humanitarian Project, an organization whose mission is to help humanity by planning and executing humanitarian projects for impoverished people around the world. Broussard holds a Bachelor of Science in marketing from the University of New Orleans and a Master of International Business from the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy. He was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Civic Organization Seat.

**Aron Davidson** was reappointed to the International Affairs Board. He is the Director for San Diego and Imperial with the United States Department of Commerce, U.S. Commercial Service, where he leads a team of professionals who support regional businesses by delivering a comprehensive array of export programs and services. Prior to this role, Davidson served as the Commercial Service's Global Team Leader for Travel and Tourism, helping destinations promote themselves around the world to increase visitation to the United States. Before returning to federal service, he was a Lead Associate at Booz Allen Hamilton, a strategic consulting and technology firm, working in international program management and also served as the Director of Government Business Development for a global language and business services company. He has a master's degree in international trade policy from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey and a Bachelor of Arts in international relations and Spanish from UC, Davis. Davidson was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Qualified County Resident Seat.

**Hampton Brown** was reappointed to the International Affairs Board. He is the Vice President and Chief Revenue Officer for the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, where he is responsible for oversight and management of all non-aeronautical revenue streams and an air service marketing professional with over 15 years of experience. Prior to this role, he served as the Director of Air Service Development. Hampton holds a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania and a master's in management in international management from the University of

Maryland. He was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Qualified County Resident Seat.

**Paul Marttila** was reappointed to the International Affairs Board. He is a foreign direct investment, international trade and economic development professional who brings over 40 years of international experience to the board. His career experience involves having been deployed as an expatriate for 14 years (in three countries) with actual on-the-ground business experience in 45 countries on five continents. He has held senior positions in both the public and private sectors and wants to help San Diego attract more international companies, assist existing firms in globalizing their businesses, and otherwise assist in advancing the global interests of San Diego firms and residents. Marttila holds a Bachelor of Arts in economics and government from Franklin & Marshall College and a master's degree in international business from the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce at the University of Kentucky. Marttila was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Qualified County Resident Seat.

**Suzanne Svahn** was reappointed to the International Affairs Board. She is a licensed realtor, the president of the Swedish American Chamber of Commerce, a board member at the House of Sweden and a Member of the SWEA Swedish Women Education Association. She is a graduate of SDSU, where she studied marketing. She was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Civic Organization Seat.

**Joel Valenzuela** was reappointed to the International Affairs Board. He is the Director of Maritime for the Port of San Diego, where he is responsible for the Port's Maritime Business Line, strategy and business planning, global business development and negotiations, operations management, and infrastructure planning and development for the Port's cargo and cruise businesses, waterfront industrial leaseholds, shipyards and shipbuilding facilities, and public piers and docks. He is an experienced leader in global trade and international business development, with over 20 years of global maritime industry background involving all facets of commercial and operational areas and a solid educational foundation in business management, public administration, finance, economics, and public policy. Valenzuela holds a bachelor's degree in management science/economics from UC, San Diego and two master's degrees from SDSU in public administration and business administration. Valenzuela was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Civic Organization Seat.

**David Baron** was appointed to the Balboa Park Committee. He is the chef and owner of Jackie's Jams, where he and his wife have led daily operations for over 15 years, overseeing the crafting of jams, sourcing ingredients, sales, logistics and social media. Prior to his entrepreneurial endeavors, Baron worked in public affairs and government relations, with an emphasis on gaming and hospitality on native lands. He has served on the Parks and Recreation Board and the Qualcomm Stadium Citizens Advisory Board. He holds a Bachelor of Science in political science from SDSU. He appointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2026, in the Vice Chair Seat.

**Dr. Patty Riddle** was appointed to the Balboa Park Committee. She is a retiree from the County of San Diego Department of Health Services, where she served in multiple roles, including Health Educator and Health Analyst. Currently, she's the Chair of the Balboa Park/Morley Field Community Recreation Group. Prior to these roles, she taught extensively as a professor and coached volleyball and track. Riddle is an avid user of the sports facilities at Balboa Park and Morley Field, where she's played volleyball, badminton and cycled. She holds a Bachelor of Science from Trinity University, San Antonio, a Master of Science from the University of Illinois in physical education, and a doctorate degree from the University of Illinois in health education. She was appointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2026, in the Balboa Park/Morley Field Recreation Council Representative Seat.

**Jake Banfield-Weir** was appointed to the Balboa Park Committee. He currently serves as the Director of Operations at UC San Diego's Sanford Stem Cell Institute, overseeing space planning, capital management, and strategic partnerships. He has held key roles on various boards, including the Eye Gnat Abatement Appeals Board, the City Heights Area Planning Committee and the Community Forest Advisory Board, where he chaired the Finance and Partnerships Subcommittee. A former Treasurer for the San Diego Botanical Garden Foundation, Banfield-Weir also co-owns Poverty Mountain Farms, LLC, a grant-supported environmental venture recognized nationally for its sustainability efforts. He was appointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the District 3 Representative Seat.

**Mandy Brown** was appointed to the Balboa Park Committee. She is an event planning, destination and technology professional passionate about group engagement, innovation, mentorship, continuing education and leadership. She holds an industry career position as AVP-Hybrid Production & Analytics at Within3, an innovative technology company providing an insights management platform to the life sciences industry. At Within3, Brown leads global client success teams for several technology products. She teaches at the L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality at SDSU and covers the course topics of destination management services and virtual meetings and events in the undergraduate programs. She graduated from Missouri State University with a Bachelor of Science in entertainment management and a minor in computer information systems from the College of Business and is pursuing a Master of Arts in biology through Miami University's Project Dragonfly Global Field Program. Brown was appointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the District 3 Representative Seat.

**Makeda Cheatom** was reappointed to the Balboa Park Committee. She has served as the Executive Director and Founder of the WorldBeat Cultural Center in Balboa Park for over 30 years. She has produced programs and presented artists from a wide range of cultural genres represented within the cultural center. She is the founder of her own radio show, Reggae Makossa, broadcast on Fusion Radio 102.5 FM and has been on the air for over 25 years. Cheatom was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Small or Mid-Size Institution in Balboa Park Seat.

**Michael Robinson** was reappointed to the Balboa Park Committee. He is the Principal Architect of Robi4 Architecture and Planning Inc. and serves as the President of the San Diego chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects. He also serves on the American Institute of Architects San Diego Board of Directors as an Ex-Officio member, the Balboa Park Committee of 100 and the Alumni Advisory Board at the New School of Architecture and Design. Robinson is a member of the San Diego Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and is a graduate of the Executive Master of Architecture program at the New School of Architecture and Design. He was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the District 3 Representative Seat.

**Tim Shields** was reappointed to the Balboa Park Committee. He is the Managing Director at the Old Globe. He serves as a board member of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce's LEAD program, an Advisory Board member of the San Diego Downtown Partnership and as Vice President of the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership. Shields holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in drama production from Carnegie-Mellon University. He was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in the Large Institution in Balboa Park Seat.

**Trang Pham** was reappointed to the Civil Service Commission. She currently serves as the Membership Coordinator for Childcare at the United Domestic Workers (UDW). She has worked for UDW since 2008. Throughout her time there, she has assisted in the negotiations between workers and local/federal programs that have improved the conditions for working San Diegans and gained insight into the lives of thousands of people seeking a more equal and equitable work environment. She is a member of the Asian Cohort for Alzheimer's Disease Community Advisory Board and has been a member of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance. Pham holds a bachelor's degree in economics from Economics University in Saigon and an associate degree in computer business technology from Mesa College. Pham was reappointed to a five-year term ending January 9, 2030, in the Member Seat.

**Susan Davis** was reappointed to the Commission on the Status of Women. She is a former U.S. Congresswoman who represented the City of San Diego in the House of Representatives for 20 years. Prior to her service in Congress, she served as a member of the California State Assembly and a member of the San Diego Unified Board of Education. Throughout her public service career, Davis has been a champion for education, veterans and women's rights. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from UC, Berkeley, and a master's degree in social work from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in a Member Seat.

**Lakeya Cherry** was reappointed to the Commission on the Status of Women. She is the Chief Executive Officer of The Network for Social Work Management – an international organization dedicated to strengthening and mobilizing diverse social impact leaders through education, leadership development, networking and community building. She earned a doctorate in social work from the University of Southern California, a Master of Science in social work from Columbia University, and a Bachelor of Arts



in psychology and legal studies from UC, Santa Cruz. She is being reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in a Member Seat.

**Sophie Tarazi** was reappointed to the Commission on the Status of Women. She is an attorney and San Diego native with experience in civil litigation and human rights research and advocacy. She earned a law degree with academic honors from Columbia Law School, where she served on the editorial board of the Columbia Journal of Race and Law and conducted research on fair trials for the Clooney Foundation through Columbia's Human Rights Clinic. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts from Washington University in St. Louis in political science and anthropology. She previously worked for the International Rescue Committee in San Diego as an AmeriCorps VISTA member. She was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in a Member Seat.

**Natasha Wong** was reappointed to the Commission on the Status of Women. She is the co-founder of San Diego's first fully licensed Chinese bilingual preschool and is the current superintendent and former principal of the Chinese School of San Diego. She also serves as a trustee of the San Diego County Employees' Retirement Association. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science from UC, Berkeley, a Juris Doctorate from Whittier Law School and a Master of Laws in international law from USD School of Law. She was reappointed to a two-year term ending March 1, 2027, in a Member Seat.

**Jamie Garrett** was reappointed to the Resiliency Advisory Board. She is the founder and CEO of Trellis-Strategy, where she helps clients organize their business processes and develop strategies to facilitate sustainable growth and increase community impact. She worked with the Milken Innovation Center, developing financial models and catalyzing programs and partnerships for sustainable water infrastructure in Israel and California and spearheaded strategies for ENGIE, focusing on electric vehicle infrastructure, energy resiliency and waste-to-energy growth initiatives. She sits on the Board of Directors for the Association of Women on Water, Energy, Environment and is the Board Chair for Cleantech San Diego. Garrett holds a Bachelor of Science in business administration from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and a Master of Business Administration from University of California San Diego Rady School of Management. She was reappointed to a two-year term ending August 1, 2026, in the General Seat.

**Andrew Meyer** was reappointed to the Resiliency Advisory Board. He is the Director of Conservation with the San Diego Audubon Society. For several years, he worked for the Hudson River Estuary Program on scenery preservation and reconnecting aquatic habitats through culvert mitigation and dam removal projects. Meyer holds a bachelor's degree from SUNY Binghamton in New York and a master's degree in geography from the University of Colorado, Boulder. He was reappointed to a two-year term ending August 1, 2026, in the General Seat.

**Dr. Steven Jones** was appointed to the Human Relations Commission. He is a national speaker, author and organizational psychologist and is the CEO of Global LeaderSHYFT, Inc., a firm dedicated to helping

leaders achieve excellence across countries, cultures, and time zones. Dr. Jones holds a bachelor's degree in computer science and a master's degree in both multicultural counseling and industrial/organizational psychology, as well as a doctorate degree in industrial/organizational psychology. He was appointed to a four-year term ending July 22, 2026, in the Mayoral Appointee Seat.

**Michael Sovacool** was appointed to the Small Business Advisory Board. He serves as the interim San Diego District Director for the Small Business Administration (SBA). A retired Marine Lieutenant, he has also served within the SBA as a Lender Relations Specialist, Lead Economic Development Specialist, Acting Deputy District Director and is currently serving as the Deputy District Director. He holds a master's degree in human resources from Ohio State University and a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Akron. He was appointed to a two-year term ending July 1, 2026.

**Cynthia Scott** was appointed to the Airports Advisory Committee. She is active in the Allied Gardens neighborhood and, on behalf of her neighbors, raised awareness of the need for Navajo community representation on the Committee. A human resource professional, she has worked with several local defense contracting companies providing support. Additionally, Scott has been a volunteer for the American Red Cross, Feeding San Diego and Lutheran Services. She attended California State University, Sacramento and was appointed to a four-year term ending February 28, 2028, in the Navajo Representative Seat.



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