

**Board of Supervisors Meeting Adjournment  
in honor of Thomas A. Fuentes  
May 22, 2012**

**Comments by Supervisor Patricia C. Bates, Fifth District**

Our County lost a great patriot and leader this past Saturday with the passing of Tom Fuentes, Chairman Emeritus of the Republican Party of Orange County. Tom was a proud American, dedicated Republican leader, devout Catholic, loving husband and father, and mentor to countless individuals. A sixth generation Californian, Thomas Alexander Fuentes was born on Oct. 16, 1948, in Los Angeles. In 1962, he moved with his family to Orange County. He attended Santa Ana College, where he twice served as student body president. In 1970, he received a B.A. in government from Chapman University. Following college, Tom served as an Executive Assistant for the Fifth District, working for Supervisor Ronald Caspers.

We all know Tom first and foremost as the man who chaired the Republican Party of Orange County for twenty years, from 1984 to 2004. During those two decades that he was leader, he made the Orange County Republican Party the strongest in the nation. He took great pride in the fact that Orange County was known as "America's most Republican County" and that is in large part due to the volunteer grassroots infrastructure built by Tom.

It is a tribute to Tom's political genius that President Richard Nixon once said "Tom Fuentes knows more about California politics than anyone else, and he is a good man."

Tom knew and had the confidence of many of our nation's most influential political leaders. Presidents, Governors, Senators and even County Supervisors sought his advice and guidance.

In fact, as Bruce Herschensohn has pointed out, when Presidents or presidential candidates came to town for events, they all wanted to sit next to Tom.

While Tom may have taken part in the Big Leagues of American Politics he never forgot the importance of building the farm team. He could talk to Presidents, but never failed to make time for the neighborhood precinct walker. He knew that a

political movement depended on everyone, from the leaders at the very top all the way down to the grassroots volunteer. In fact, it was the volunteers that Tom valued above all else. Many of the current and up and coming leaders of our party started as young volunteers mentored by Tom. He knew that the young person who engaged in the democratic process by walking a precinct for the first time, could themselves be motivated and inspired to become a future leader. That was the case with Tom himself, he walked his first precinct at age 12 for Richard Nixon's 1960 presidential campaign.

Why was Tom so successful in his efforts? Because he was a fundamentally good and decent man who cared deeply about the people he served. As a devoutly religious man he put the needs of others before his own. Tom did go to the seminary to become a Catholic priest. In the end the priesthood was not his calling, but he never forgot to serve others. To that end he helped found the Second Harvest Food Bank.

In a final speech to the OC GOP faithful at the 2011 Flag Day Dinner Tom said, "I love our Party, I love the ideals and principles of the founding fathers of our Republic...I will stand with you in defense of those ideals and principles until I can physically stand no more. Please continue to stand with me."

With Tom's passing we lose a strong advocate for the principles of a free society, principles that we as citizens of this great country hold dear. As we govern the County of Orange let us always keep in mind Tom's example, and let us act in ways that are worthy of those high ideals.

A vigil service will be held tonight at 7:00p.m. The Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. tomorrow, May 23rd. Both will be held at Santiago de Compostela Catholic Church in Lake Forest.

With that I request we adjourn the meeting in memory of Tom Fuentes and extend our sympathies to his loving wife Jolene, his daughter Michelle and sons Tj and Joey.