



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Orange County Water District Director Kathryn Barr Retires** *Popular and longest standing board member in the history of OCWD bids farewell after 35 years of service*

**FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif.** (Dec. 4, 2014) –The longest standing board member in the history of the Orange County Water District (OCWD; District) —Kathryn L. Barr—is retiring after 35 years of service.

Director Barr was first appointed August 28, 1979 to the District Board of Directors by the Orange County Board of Supervisors to represent division one—the cities of Garden Grove, Stanton and Westminster. She was then elected to the Board in November 1979. Since then, Director Barr has served nine consecutive terms, more than any other board member.

As OCWD board members, their mandates are to steward conservation in the District, to protect Orange County’s water rights to the Santa Ana River and to manage the vast groundwater basin relied upon by 2.4 million people in Orange County.

“It has been an exciting experience and a continual learning process,” says Director Barr. “I have witnessed many highs and some lows, but the memories I will most fondly take away are the wonderful relationships I have made and the District’s many firsts and innovations that have taken place during my tenure.”

Water Factory 21—the county’s first wastewater purification plant—had come online just a few years prior to Director Barr’s appointment and most of OCWD’s efforts were concentrated on its operation. During the mid-1980s, the District began planning the Green Acres Project that now supplies nonpotable water for golf courses, public parks and landscaping in the cities of Fountain Valley, Santa Ana, Costa Mesa, and Newport Beach—saving those cities a substantial amount of money.

She was also instrumental in working with her fellow board members to complete the Prado Wetland expansion and the Advanced Water Quality Assurance Laboratory opened its doors and earned full certification under her watch, among many other programs and projects.

“The Groundwater Replenishment System, which came into use in 2008, was our biggest step toward being independent and drought-resistant, and the project of which I am most proud,” says Barr.

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The GWRS takes treated wastewater that would otherwise flow to the ocean and purifies it to near-distilled quality. The 70 million gallons per day of reused water—enough to meet the needs of 600,000 people—is recharged or percolated into the huge groundwater basin that lies under north and central Orange County. A large portion of the water is also used for seawater intrusion barriers so saltwater from the Pacific Ocean doesn't contaminate the groundwater basin.

In addition, Director Barr has been instrumental in the first phase expansion of the GWRS that will bring 30 million more gallons a day—to provide water for 850,000 total people—beginning in early 2015.

“Kay Barr is greatly respected by her fellow board members,” says District President Shawn Dewane. She is extremely knowledgeable, a dedicated colleague and, in addition to her indefatigable work for OCWD, she has been a public servant in Orange County for more than 50 years.”

Within the City of Garden Grove, she helped to build the Louis Lake Senior Center, the Main Branch Library, Atlantis Play Center, the Garden Grove Park and the Lee D. Barr Memorial, named after her beloved husband and former Garden Grove Mayor. Director Barr's love of Garden Grove was equally shared by her husband. They were very active in the Garden Grove Community and served together in many service club organizations. They even started the first Baseball Little League in Garden Grove.

Director Barr also served this country during World War II, together with other entertainers and producer Larry Crosby, brother of Bing Crosby, and performed at Army bases in the United States. She personally volunteered more than 1,000 hours at the Community Hospital of Long Beach and volunteered at Real Help to assist feeding the homeless, as well.

Among her many accolades, she was Garden Grove Woman of the Year in 1976 and Cypress College Community Leader of the Year in 1980, but she considers her family her greatest achievement in life.

“Director Kay Barr has been the consummate professional in exercising her duties and responsibilities as an OCWD board member. She greatly respected the time and efforts of her fellow board members, was always on time to meetings, was prepared, and completed all assignments. She has also been a model member of the local community,” says OCWD General Manager Mike Markus. “We will forever remember her with great admiration.”

At the November 19 Board Meeting, Director Barr was presented with a resolution commending her for dedicating 35 years of service as an OCWD board member. A reception just prior to the meeting featured commendations and resolutions from several local water providers and elected officials throughout Orange County.

Director Barr's last day is December 5. Former Garden Grove City Councilwoman Dina Nguyen, who won the division one seat on the OCWD board, will officially start on December 5 at noon.

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***About Orange County Water District (OCWD)***

*The Orange County Water District is committed to enhancing Orange County's groundwater quality and reliability in an environmentally friendly and economical manner. The following cities rely on the groundwater basin managed by OCWD to provide 72 percent of their water demands: Anaheim, Buena Park, Costa Mesa, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Irvine, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Newport Beach, Orange, Placentia, Santa Ana, Seal Beach, Stanton, Tustin, Villa Park, Westminster and Yorba Linda.*

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