

SFGate

Board Applauds Historic Occasion / First black supervisor

Jason B. Johnson, Chronicle Staff Writer
Jan. 10, 2001 Updated: Feb. 2, 2012 3:16 p.m.



Chronicle / Michael Macor



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Federal Glover, the newest member of the Contra Costa Co. Board of Supervisors , is sworn into office by Judge Jarrett J. Grant. Glover is the first African American to serve as a Supervisor in the Boards 150 year history. by Michael Macor/The ChronicleMICHAEL MACOR

An emotional audience stood and cheered yesterday as Federal Glover was sworn in as the first African American member of the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors in the county's 150-year history.

Glover said his achievement showed that the county had become more open and accepting of diversity and urged others to believe that nothing was beyond their reach, regardless of individual circumstances.

"I would say to my children today, keep the faith with whatever you want in life," a smiling Glover said looking down at his family seated in the board chamber's front row. "Changing times are about us."

Glover, a former Pittsburg city councilman, defeated Antioch Mayor Mary Rocha in the Nov. 7 runoff election to replace Joe Canciamilla, who was elected to the state Assembly.

East Contra Costa's Fifth District includes Pittsburg, Antioch, Brentwood, Oakley, Byron and Discovery Bay.

Glover predicted that the board would soon reflect the full diversity of the county.

Other supervisors spent much of the board's first meeting of the year remarking on the significance of Glover's election.

"I think this is a historic occasion," said Supervisor John Gioia. "I think,

I hope, it says something about the entire county."

Supervisor Donna Gerber said it was an honor to welcome Glover as a member of the board.

"This has really been a special day," Supervisor Mark DeSaulnier told Glover. "I can't tell you how moved I am today, and how I feel about your presence, Federal."

DeSaulnier noted with a laugh that he and Gioia now make up a new minority on the five-member board -- white men. The two other board members are women.

Contra Costa County has experienced rapid growth in recent years, as farmland and small suburban towns have been flooded with middle-class families in search of affordable housing.

Whites accounted for 70 percent of the county's population in 1990 and 65 percent in 1998, according to figures from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Contra Costa led the nine-county Bay Area in population growth in the 1990s,

the number of residents having increased 14.2 percent from 1990 to 1998, with eastern Contra Costa leading the way.

Glover, a member of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, campaigned on a platform of reining in growth, expanding public transportation and locating job centers near BART stations.

In other action, the board voted without objection to approve incoming Board Chairwoman Gayle Uilkema's decision to appoint Glover to fill the board's seat on the Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission.

Supervisor Donna Gerber, a strong slow-growth advocate, had wanted to fill the development panel seat formerly held by Canciamilla.

As head of the board, Uilkema makes recommendations for committee assignments. Uilkema, who is also a commission member, said her decision was based on the need to keep someone from east Contra Costa on the commission, which has power over development and annexation decisions.

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