

STEVEN P. DINKIN A Path Forward

SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR: PARAGON OF CIVILITY, MODERATION

Reading remembrances of the late Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, I'm transported to a bygone era, when civility, moderation and pragmatism mattered.

O'Connor died on Dec. 1 at age 93. She was the first woman to serve on the court, appointed by President Ronald Reagan in 1981 to fulfill a campaign pledge. As Joshua Neveff of BBC News told the story, Reagan interviewed O'Connor for 15 minutes. He was charmed by her "southwestern disposition" and impressed by her sharp intellect, calling O'Connor a "woman for all seasons."

Speaking to The Hill, justices who served with O'Connor — and others who followed her to the bench — reverentially described her qualities.

Justice Clarence Thomas said he felt lonely and isolated when he first arrived at the court in 1991, but for a while, rebuffed O'Connor's frequent lunch invitations.

He agreed to join her after learning that O'Connor made all the justices come to lunch. "She was the glue," Thomas remarked,

and "the reason this place was civil."

Justice Amy Coney Barrett, who was 9 years old when O'Connor was appointed to the Supreme Court, noted the weight of being the first woman to serve. Rather than mimicking men, she said, Justice O'Connor decided to do it her own way, "feminine touches included, with all the world watching." Barrett called it a remarkable show of self-confidence and independence.

Sandra Day was born in El Paso, Texas, in 1930. She grew up on the family's cattle ranch, Lazy B, in southeastern Arizona. It had no running water or electricity. According to the National Women's History Museum, family finances were tight — but the Days still subscribed to The Wall Street Journal, The New Yorker, and other periodicals, which young Sandra read with her mother.

O'Connor attended school in El Paso but returned to the ranch during summers. There, she learned to drive a truck, shoot a rifle and ride with the cowboys, imbuing the toughness she was known and admired for.

At age 16, O'Connor enrolled in Stanford University. After graduating with honors, she went on to Stanford Law School. Despite excelling (O'Connor graduated in the top 10 percent of her class), jobs weren't forthcoming. She was told — point blank — that law firms don't hire female attorneys. She went to work for little pay as a deputy attorney in San Mateo County.

Many years later, when O'Connor was unanimously confirmed to serve as the high court's 102nd justice, she arrived there to find no women's restroom.

O'Connor was on the bench for nearly 25 years. During her tenure, she refused to be pigeonholed by the left or right, becoming the crucial swing vote. As Michael Mathes of Agence France-Presse observed, it confounded both her critics and supporters. (O'Connor was a Republican.)

Mathes wrote, "As much as she infuriated liberals by siding with the majority that blocked the 2000 Florida vote recount and effectively handed the presidency to George W. Bush, she also outraged conservatives a few years

later by helping to uphold the University of Michigan Law School's right to run an affirmative action admissions policy."

Her willingness to collaborate and compromise with other justices affected the outcomes of numerous cases — most notably the 1992 decision to uphold Roe v. Wade, which protected abortion under the constitutional right to privacy.

According to Sonja Anderson, a reporter for Smithsonian Magazine, O'Connor — who wanted abortion to remain legal — had never been satisfied with Roe's use of pregnancy trimesters to define abortion restrictions.

So, she and two fellow justices engineered a new standard based on fetal viability (when a human fetus can live outside the womb, typically about 23-24 weeks of gestational age). It prohibited states from imposing an "undue burden" on a woman's right to choose before that point. With this new standard, O'Connor was able to secure the vote of conservative Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, who thought it balanced a woman's rights and the state's interests in protecting lives. With

a five-justice majority, Roe was reaffirmed.

How ironic that when O'Connor died, her signature decision had been overturned, with Justice Samuel Alito — the man who succeeded her on the court — writing the majority opinion. Affirmative action was also overturned, and public confidence in the court has plummeted.

O'Connor's preference for pragmatism over ideology — and her trailblazing, which inspired so many women — led the National Conflict Resolution Center to extend an invitation to O'Connor to be our National Peacemaker Award honoree. Because of a scheduling conflict, she respectfully declined.

Sandra Day O'Connor may have served on the Supreme Court for a quarter-century, but her legacy will endure for generations. Her reasoned voice is already missed.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit ncrconline.com.

NATIONAL CITY HIRES INTERIM FOR PERMANENT CITY MANAGER POST

Benjamin Martinez had been one of several doing top job

BY TAMMY MURGA

NATIONAL CITY

After several months of unexpected turnover in the city manager's position, National City Council members decided last week to permanently fill the role from within City Hall.

Officials unanimously approved a 2½-year contract with Benjamin Martinez, who had been serving in the role on an interim basis since August.

He thanked the City

Council for the opportunity.

"I really ask you to join me in a solemn and productive way of doing business with the city," he said. "I'm going to give it my all. I'm gonna expect my executive team to give it their all."

Martinez will be paid an annual base salary of \$255,719, plus benefits, including a yearly vehicle allowance of \$9,000. The city is also providing him with a monthly housing allowance of \$1,200. His contract includes a 6 percent raise in February and it expires June 30, 2026.

The position has been filled on an interim basis since former City Manager Brad Raulston and the city

agreed to part ways in May.

Officials had selected the late Armando Vergara as the replacement, but he died of natural causes in late June. Deputy City Manager Scott Huth was then named acting city manager before Martinez was appointed.

Martinez, a Bonita native, first joined the city in 1996, working for the now-dissolved Community Development Commission, which was a redevelopment, housing authority and economic development agency. The city rehired him a year ago as manager of Neighborhood Services. He then stepped in as acting director of Community Development, where he oversaw the Building, Planning and Neighborhood Services divisions. Vergara previously held that position before moving to the City Manager's Office.

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SMOLENS

FROM B1 reduce greenhouse gases. Al Jaber attempted to walk back his comments, but the damage was done.

Regardless, worldwide commitments on reducing fossil fuel emissions don't seem to be working. The Global Carbon Project found climate pollution from fossil fuels — coal, oil and natural gas — increased around the world, according to CNN.

The organization's report noted coal and oil emissions have increased significantly in India and China, while the U.S. and the European Union showed strong declines in coal. Emissions from natural gas are increasing in the U.S., China and India, but decreasing in the EU.

Air conditioning will be needed to give immediate relief to people on this warming planet. But if clean energy does not become the world's dominant power source, the emissions from increased electricity use appears destined to generate more warming greenhouse gases.

At COP28, 60 nations reached a voluntary agreement to reduce emissions from air conditioning and other cooling machines, such as refrigerators. A U.N. report said in addition to improving efficiency, phasing out the use of hydrofluorocarbons, known as HFCs, used in air conditioners and refrigerators would help reduce global-warming emissions.

Congress and the Biden and Trump administrations have acted on legislation and rules to reduce HFCs. As with so many other efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, negotiations to soften industry opposition — or neutralize it — were not easy.

But sometimes even seemingly low-hanging fruit can be difficult to pick. A head-shaking story by James Bikales of Politico about a federal effort to greatly increase the number of electric vehicle



PETER DEJONG AP

John Kerry, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, attends an event Dec. 2 at the COP28 U.N. Climate Summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

chargers across the country is a case in point.

At the urging of the Biden administration, Congress agreed in 2021 to spend \$7.5 billion to build tens of thousands of electric vehicle chargers, "aiming to appease anxious drivers while tackling climate change," Bikales wrote.

Two years later, the program has yet to install a single charger from the money included in the bipartisan infrastructure law. In short, bureaucratic hurdles got in the way, though there's hope that at least some of the chargers will go online next year.

Bikales said states and the charger industry blame the delays mostly on contracting and performance requirements tied to the federal funds. More than \$2 billion was authorized to go to states, but fewer than half the states had started taking bids from contractors to build the chargers as of late November, when Bikales' story was published.

Demand for electric vehicles has boomed in recent years, though auto manufacturers are anticipating a near-term slowdown. Automakers cited high borrowing costs as one reason, but there are others.

"They say consumers are concerned about the range of EVs and lack of infrastructure," wrote Phillip Molnar of the Union-Tribune.

The big climate-change picture right now may be

grim, but we don't have to give in to a nihilistic downward spiral.

Substantial long-term growth is still projected for electric vehicles, which may receive a boost with more confidence that charging stations will be available.

Clean energy production is growing fast because of booming solar, wind and other renewable energy projects.

In the waning days of COP28 there was still talk about an agreement calling for a "phase-out" of fossil fuels — or a less-intense "phase-down" — despite opposition from some major oil-producing countries.

Even Al Jaber, while defending his remarks, said, "the phase-down and the phaseout of fossil fuels is inevitable."

And if nuclear fusion ever transitions from the research and development stage to practical, real-world use, San Diego will be in the middle of it.

What they said

The Washington Post: "Ryan Roth voted for himself to serve on the city council in Rainier, Wash., which led him to win the election by one vote when his opponent didn't cast a ballot."

Observed Gil Cabrera, chair of the San Diego Airport Authority, on X: "Always vote."

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UNLOCKING THE FULL SPECTRUM OF LIVING

The unrivaled value of community living for older adults

Nestled among 24 acres of exotic landscaping, Fredericka Manor stands as a testament to the fulfilling and vibrant lifestyle that a full-service community can offer seniors in San Diego. Year after year, residents find unparalleled value in the enriching experiences and tight-knit camaraderie that defines the strength of community.

Richard, an avid gardener, shares, "People come by and visit the garden to see who's doing what and what's growing. And we take that stuff and share it. I've never grown zucchini before, so I planted some, and my wife started finding recipes for zucchini bread. We had more than we could eat, so we share it with our neighbors and other people we eat with in the dining room sometimes." This exemplifies the spirit of sharing and friendship that permeates throughout the community, turning simple moments into cherished memories.

Residents at Fredericka Manor enjoy a life free from the worries of landscaping, maintenance and housekeeping. They indulge in chef-prepared meals and engage in enriching educational and social activities. With the rising costs of home upkeep, choosing a community offering comprehensive support is both convenient and a wise investment. These communities provide more than just a place to live; they offer a nurturing environment where every day is an opportunity to thrive in a caring and engaged community, celebrating the joy and richness of well-lived years.

Angie, another resident, expresses her gratitude for the myriad of activities

available. "I like all the activities they have there, I have a choice. I take an exercise class every day. And it is attended by 20 or more people. I'm grateful for everything that they do for me there. I don't have to cook; I have all the free time and do whatever I like here." This freedom to choose, paired with the plethora of activities, empowers residents to lead fulfilling lives filled with purpose and enjoyment.

Arlene, Angie's daughter, attests to the positive transformation she has witnessed in her mother, stating, "I see that she's taking care of herself very well. She's very much blossomed here. We know that she's safe. That's the main thing. And she's making new friends." The assurance of safety and the flourishing social connections speak volumes about the holistic support that can be enjoyed at Fredericka Manor.

As you consider your retirement living options, let Fredericka Manor be the beacon guiding you towards a life filled with joy, friendship, and endless possibilities. Embrace the extraordinary value of each year at Fredericka Manor — where community, activities, and care converge to create a haven for a vibrant and fulfilling retirement.

Time is running out! Take advantage of 50% savings off for a whole year on select accommodations at Fredericka Manor.

Call today, or visit our website to learn more about the enriching community at Fredericka Manor.

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POLITICS

FROM B1

San Diego City Attorney Mara Elliott is a two-way battle between Assemblymember Brian Maienschein and Chief Deputy City Attorney Heather Ferbert.

Incumbent Joe LaCava, who represents San Diego Council District 1, is facing challenger Anthony Olmo. Incumbent Stephen Whitburn, who represents San Diego's District 3, is facing two fellow Democrats — Coleen Cusack and Kate Callen — and Republican Ellis California Jones.

In District 5, incumbent Democrat Marni von Wilpert is facing Brittany Naucke. In District 7, incumbent Democrat Raul Campillo is running unopposed. And in District 9, incumbent Democrat Sean Elov-Rivera has two challengers: fellow Democrat Terry Hoskins and independent Fernando Garcia.

In a special election to replace Monica Montgomery Stepe in the city's District 4, the candidates are Chida Warren-Darby, Shane Harris, Henry Foster, Tony Hawkins and Tylisa Suseberry. Filing closes Dec. 14 in that race.

In state Assembly races, DeMaio, a Republican who ran unsuccessfully for Congress after leaving city office, is facing off against fellow Republican Andrew Hayes,

an aide to state Sen. Brian Jones in the 75th District, which stretches across inland North and East County.

Hayes has been endorsed by the Republican party for the seat, which is now held by termed-out Marie Waldron. Other candidates include Christie Dougherty, Jack Fernandes, Joy Frew and Kevin Juza.

In the 76th Assembly District, candidates to replace termed-out Maienschein include Republican Kristie Bruce-Lane — who ran unsuccessfully against him last year — and Democrats Darshana Patel, a member of the Poway Unified school board, and Joseph Rocha.

In the 77th Assembly District, Democrat Tasha Boerner is facing challengers James Browne and Henny Kupferstein.

In the 79th Assembly District, candidates include Lashae Sharp-Collins, La Mesa Councilmember Colin Parent and Lemon Grove Mayor Raquel Vasquez. Sharp-Collins has been endorsed by Assemblymember Akilah Weber, who is vacating the seat to run for state Senate.

In congressional races, Rep. Sara Jacobs, a Democrat, is facing a challenge in the 51st district from Republican Wells, the El Cajon mayor. Other candidates in that race are David Burton, Stan Caplan, Barrett Holman Leap and Hilaire Fuji Shioura.

In the 49th Congressional District, generally considered the county's most competitive, Democrat Mike Levin is facing Republican challengers Margarita Wilkinson and Matt Gunderson, who ran unsuccessfully last year for the state Senate seat now held by Catherine Blakepear.

In Chula Vista, two City Council seats are up for grabs in March, Districts 3 and 4. A special runoff election to fill the city attorney seat will also appear on the March ballot.

In District 3, which encompasses the city's southeast corner, Alonso Gonzalez was appointed in January after Steve Padilla was elected to the Legislature, but Gonzalez is barred from running. Six people filed nomination papers: David Alcaraz, Hassan Fender, Michael Inunza, Christos Korgan, Leticia Mungia and Daniel Rice-Vazquez.

In District 4, first-term Councilmember Andrea Cardenas is running for a second term despite facing criminal charges. Her opponents are Christine Bredya, Cesar Fernandez, Delina Gonzalez, Rudy Ramirez and Jose Sarmiento.

In the city attorney race, Marco Verdugo and Bart Miesfeld are vying for the post.

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