



*Press Release*  
*Office of Mayor Chuck Reed*

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**San José City Council Appoints LaDoris Hazzard Cordell  
as Independent Police Auditor**

***Former Superior Court Judge Brings Diverse Experience  
and Community Connections to Role of IPA***

*SAN JOSE* –The San José City Council today appointed LaDoris Hazzard Cordell as San José’s Independent Police Auditor.

“LaDoris brings a depth of experience and a solid track record of community service that will serve the City of San José well in her new role of Independent Police Auditor,” said Mayor Chuck Reed.

Cordell recently retired from her role as Vice Provost and Special Counselor to the President for Campus Relations at Stanford University. A former Superior and Municipal Court Judge, she served on the Palo Alto City Council from 2004 to 2008.

“I look forward to serving the residents of San José in the role of Independent Police Auditor and reaching out to the variety of constituencies that the office serves,” Cordell said. “From my years as a state court judge and as a city councilmember, I have worked with all sides in the justice system from law enforcement to victims and their families to community organizations. My goal is to bring that experience to this new role and work collaboratively with all the stakeholders.”

Under San José’s City Charter, the Independent Police Auditor is appointed by the City Council and is responsible for reviewing San José Police Department investigations of complaints against police officers to determine if the investigation was complete, thorough, objective and fair; making recommendations regarding Police Department policies and procedures based on the Independent Police Auditor’s review of investigations of complaints against police officers; conducting public outreach to educate the community on the role of the Independent Police Auditor and to assist the community with the process and procedures for investigation of complaints against police officers.

Cordell’s start date will be in late May, 2010.

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## **LaDoris Hazzard Cordell Biography**

LaDoris Hazzard Cordell is a 1974 graduate of Stanford Law School. A native of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, she has resided in California since 1971. For five years, she practiced law in East Palo Alto, California, a predominately African American and Mexican American community, establishing herself as the first lawyer to open a private law practice there.

In 1978, she was appointed Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at Stanford Law School, a job which she held in addition to her private law practice. During her four-year tenure at Stanford, Cordell was responsible for implementing a minority admissions program which resulted in the emergence of Stanford Law School as the leader in the nation in its enrollment of students of color.

Her work experiences have taken her to the Mississippi Delta, where, in 1967, she directed a tutoring program for black school children. She worked for one year as an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund in San Francisco, and hosted a 13-week program on KSOL radio entitled "Crime, the Courts and You."

She has extensive community involvement which has included membership on the boards of the United Way of Santa Clara County, the National Conference for Community and Justice, the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children, the Asian Law Alliance, and Mills College.

Featured three times in Ebony magazine, she is a recipient of Santa Clara County's Woman of Achievement Award, and was the first recipient of the Juliette Gordon Low Award presented by the Girl Scouts of Santa Clara County. She was awarded the prestigious Don Peters Volunteer of the Year Award by the United Way of Santa Clara County, was honored by the Ba'hai's with their Community Service Award, and was given an Award of Special Recognition by the Human Relations Commission of Santa Clara County.

In 1996, she received an Advocates for Justice Award from the Legal Aid Society of Santa Clara County, was honored by the Asian Law Alliance as their Legal Impact Honoree, was given the Social Justice Award by the San Francisco Women's Centers and the San Francisco Women's Building, and was honored for her work on behalf of children by Legal Advocates for Children & Youth of Santa Clara County. In 1998, she was the recipient of the Josephine and Frank Duveneck Humanitarian Award. In 2004, she received the Ghandi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize and the Rose Bird Memorial Award. In 2005, she received the Community Service Award from Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom. In 2006, she was given the Award of Excellence by the Thurgood Marshal Scholarship Fund. And, in 2007, she was the recipient of the Silicon Valley NAACP's Freedom Fighter Award and the Tom Bradley Community Service and Distinguished Citizen Award from Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

In 1990, Cordell founded the African American Donor Task Force, a grassroots organization, whose purpose was to increase the number of African American donors of blood, bone marrow, and organs.

On April 13, 1982, Governor Jerry Brown appointed Cordell to the Municipal Court of Santa Clara County, making her the first African American woman judge in all of northern California. During her tenure in the Municipal Court, she served as the Presiding Judge and as a Justice Pro Tem on the State Court of Appeal. In 1987, she was the first judge in the state to order convicted drunk drivers to install breath devices in their vehicles, thus making it impossible for these individuals to drink and drive.

On June 7, 1988, Cordell overwhelmingly won election to the Superior Court of Santa Clara County. She was the first African American Superior Court Judge in the county's history, and the first African American woman to sit on the Superior Court in northern California.

During her tenure on the Superior Court, Cordell implemented many innovative programs. One program was the highly acclaimed Supervised Visitation Project, the first of its kind in the state. This program employs senior citizens to supervise visits between abusive parents and their children. Thereafter, she created, in conjunction with the American Association of Retired Persons, the G.R.E.A.T. Project (Guardianship Review and Evaluation Assessment Team), the first of its kind in Santa Clara County. This project utilizes volunteers from the community to assist the courts in monitoring children who have been placed in guardianships.

In December, 1988, Cordell traveled to South Africa to participate in that country's first Human Rights conference. She received international attention when she was detained by the South African police during her visit to a black township. She is the subject of an award-winning PBS documentary, "Color of Justice" which is based upon her South Africa visit. She has also been featured in two highly-acclaimed television documentaries on the three-strikes law and on juvenile justice.

In January, 1996, a public exhibition of Cordell's art work opened to favorable reviews. She donated all proceeds from the sale of her drawings to the Support Network for Battered Women. In 1998, 1999, and 2000, Legal Advocates for Children & Youth (LACY), a nonprofit legal service for Santa Clara County's youth, produced calendars which featured cartoons drawn by Cordell. Sales of the calendars generated several thousand dollars for LACY. And then, in January, 2002, a second art exhibit and auction of her artwork and her 2002 cartoon calendar raised over \$13,000 for the East Palo Alto Mural Art Project.

In March, 1996, Cordell was elected "President of the United States" by the Santa Clara County Girl Scouts in a hotly contested race. And, in 2001, she was named "Judge of the Year" by the Santa Clara County Trial Lawyers Association. In 2004, she was named the recipient of the Rose Bird Memorial Award by the California Women Lawyers Association.

On February 28, 2001, after almost 19 years, Cordell retired from the Superior Court. The following day, she began her employment at Stanford University as Vice Provost and Special Counselor to the President for Campus Relations. After eight years, she retired from that position in 2009.

On November 4, 2003, Cordell won election to the Palo Alto City Council. Accepting no monetary donations, she ran a grassroots campaign and won a seat on the City Council, finishing ahead of two of the four incumbents. She completed her 4 years on the Council in 2007, opting not to run for a second term. When she was elected to the City Council, Cordell became the first public official in the nation to lead a soul linedance at a swearing-in to office, thereby fulfilling a campaign promise to her supporters.

Cordell is an on-camera legal analyst for CBS-5 Bay Area television and is a guest commentator on CourtTV. She has also appeared on ABC's "Nightline," "Good Morning America," and the Montel Williams Show. Additionally, she has been interviewed by Amy Goodman on her national radio program "Democracy Now!"

Last, but not least, Cordell is a mother and grandmother.