

# County of Santa Clara

Registrar of Voters

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## **TWO SANTA CLARA COUNTY ELECTION OFFICERS TO BE RECOGNIZED BY SECRETARY OF STATE**

Rita Chavez Medina and Helen Garza, who have staffed the polls during elections for decades, will be recognized on Tuesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, by Secretary of State Debra Bowen, for their extraordinary commitment to the electoral process.

For decades, the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters has depended on Rita and Helen to help keep the polls operating smoothly. Experienced Election Officers, like Rita and Helen, are critically important and play a crucial role in the success of an election. They are part of the team the Registrar of Voters relies on, especially in countywide elections, such as the November Presidential General Election coming up, where thousands of Election Officers are needed to staff the hundreds of polling places throughout the county.

Rita's involvement in voter registration and election service began in 1952 and she has consistently worked the polls since 1966. Her election service started at the request of her brother, Cesar Chavez, co-founder of the United Farm Workers AFL-CIO. She continues to serve as a mentor to Spanish speaking Election Officers in Morgan Hill.

Helen decided she wanted to help during the historic 1960 Presidential election that found her hand counting huge ungainly ballots at the Registrar of Voters' Office, until noon on the day after the election. At the urging of her mother, who was an Inspector, she started serving at the polls as an Election Officer. Helen has worked every presidential election since then. In the early 1970's, Helen decided to have an even greater role in the elections process and began to offer her home as a polling place. The Garza garage became the place where the neighborhood went to vote. It is a polling place and a neighborhood hub, and to this very day, it is still the neighborhood polling place.

Rita's and Helen's dedication, commitment and patriotism are inspiring. Their service to community is invaluable and commendable.

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"Election after election, Rita and Helen have been an indispensable part of Santa Clara County elections, and I can't thank them enough for their commitment and dedication" said Secretary Bowen, California's chief elections official. "Veteran poll workers can't do it alone, so I hope more voters and high school students in Santa Clara County join Helen and Rita at the polls on Election Day!"

"We are honored to have these two ladies serve Santa Clara County for such a long time. Their contribution to the election process, in Santa Clara County, is invaluable. They are not doing this for the money, they are doing it for the love of their county, state, and country" added Barry Garner, Registrar of Voters.

The recognition ceremony will take place at 1 p.m., on Tuesday, at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2 (Auditorium) in San Jose.

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