

# PROCLAMATION



City and County of Denver

## **Proclamation No. 22-1051 Recognition of the Retirement of Victoria Ortega**

**WHEREAS**, Victoria “Vicky” Ortega wanted to work in government since she was a 16-year-old senior at Mapleton High School; and

**WHEREAS**, Vicky Ortega met Wilma and Wellington Webb and came to believe in their vision for Denver. Shortly after receiving her bar exam results, she worked resolutely for Wellington Webb’s mayoral campaign before joining the Denver City Attorney’s Office; and

**WHEREAS**, when she came to the City Attorney’s Office in September 1991, Vicky Ortega was the third woman attorney ever to join the Contracts Unit and was the only person of color there. With strength, fortitude, grace, and inexhaustible support for others, she countered racism and gender discrimination whenever she witnessed or experienced it; and

**WHEREAS**, within three months, Vicky Ortega was defending a challenge to the constitutionality of Denver’s ordinance creating a fair and level playing field for contract opportunities for minority and women owned (M/WBE) construction and design companies. After eleven years of zealous representation, under the leadership of City Attorney Daniel E. Muse and Angelina Irizarry, Esq., Special Counsel, with the mentorship of Director John R. Gross, Norman Bangeman, Assistant City Attorney, Ray McCall, Special Counsel, and Laurie Heydman, Assistant City Attorney, and with the support of the CAO legal secretaries and paralegals, the team obtained, in 2003, the United States Supreme Court’s rejection of appeal, upholding the final Tenth Circuit ruling that Denver’s M/WBE ordinance was constitutional. The CAO team received a Special Recognition Team Award in 2003 from the Metro City Attorney’s Association for that litigation and its national impact; and

**WHEREAS**, Vicky Ortega drafted Denver’s first ordinance for a small, minority, and women owned business program for procurement and she received special recognition in May of 2014 from the Denver City Attorney at a mayoral bill signing for her innovative and collaborative work for that ordinance; and

**WHEREAS**, as a contract and transactional attorney, Vicky Ortega consistently maintained one of the highest contract caseloads averaging 330 contracts per year, annually disbursing approximately \$14 million of funds to community-based agencies to provide services and programs to Denver citizens. Her client agencies included Denver Head Start, Workforce Development, Human Rights and Community Partnerships, Children’s Affairs, Small Business Opportunity, Denver Human Services, the Mayor’s Office, and the Denver Elections Division; and

**WHEREAS**, Vicky Ortega obtained trademarks for Info Denver, Mile High Stadium, Ballot Trace, and the Denver D logo. She drafted legislation establishing the Denver Head Start Office and the Acceso Spanish Language Voter Advisory Board; drafted legislation prohibiting the use of gender conversion therapy to minors in Denver; updated the Denver Election code, and modernized certain Anti-Discrimination laws. She founded and managed the first CAO internship program to provide high school, college, and law students with public sector work experience; and

**WHEREAS**, Vicky Ortega worked tirelessly with Denver election administrators to improve the electoral process and was named to a blue-ribbon panel in 2003 by the Colorado Secretary of State; and

**WHEREAS**, Vicky Ortega performed her duties as an Assistant City Attorney as a single parent when work at home options were disfavored in the City Attorney’s Office; and

**WHEREAS**, Vicky Ortega served as Secretary for the Denver Democratic Party and was a precinct captain in Northwest Denver providing steady leadership and ensuring representation, until her assignment as advisor to the Denver Elections Division made it necessary for her to step down from that role; and

**WHEREAS**, Vicky Ortega earned a Certificate in Election Administration from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota in 2018 and in 2021 she received designation as a Certified Elections/Registration Administrator (CERA) from the National Association of Election Officials Election Center; and

**WHEREAS**, in August 2019 Vicky Ortega accepted the appointment to serve as the Denver Deputy Clerk and Recorder for Clerk Paul López where she served to protect the fundamental American right to vote, the right to marry, and the right to hold property in the City and County of Denver; and

**WHEREAS**, Vicky Ortega was considered the cornerstone of the Office of the Clerk and Recorder for her efforts to promote collaboration, flexibility, and improvement particularly for the Recordings and Records Management units. During her time in the office, she launched contact free ways of doing business during the Covid -19 pandemic while maintaining safe in-person services; helped establish a new state statute allowing remote appointments for marriage and civil union licenses; provided recommendations on legislation impacting public records; obtained training for staff to recognize human trafficking; developed redaction efforts; and facilitated for the first time online access to over 72,800 documents including minutes, resolutions, ordinances and proclamations dating from 1895 to the present; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 10, 2022, Vicky Ortega received the Alumni of the Year Award for Distinguished Achievement in Public Service from the University of Colorado School of Law Alumni Association, for her dedicated work for Denver; and

**WHEREAS**, Vicky Ortega has been dedicated to public service in all of her roles at the City and County of Denver without notoriety and has now retired after nearly 31 years where she faithfully brought commitment, strength, and know-how to the workplace each and every day, inspiring many people working in Denver government and beyond.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:**

**Section 1.** The Council of the City and County of Denver honors Victoria “Vicky” Ortega for her service and commitment to the residents of the City and the countless contributions made to the Denver City Attorney’s Office and the Office of the Clerk and Recorder upon her retirement August 1, 2022.

**Section 2.** The Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall attest and affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and a copy be provided to Victoria “Vicky” Ortega.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL August 29, 2022



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PRESIDENT