



Council President Alder Yannette Figueroa Cole

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Honoring a Remarkable Leader and a Sisterhood of Service

Today, I have the privilege to honor not just a public servant but a sister, a friend, and a force of nature who has left an undeniable mark on this council over the past four years.

The first time I spoke to Alder Bennett was back in 2021, during our first run for office. Because of Covid-19, we could not meet in person, so she called me. We talked about the campaign, her life experience, losing her mother at a young age, her work ethic, and her passion for social justice. She sounded like an old soul with experiences foreign to someone my age. But then she asked me if I knew "this app called Venmo"! I rolled my eyes, and short and direct words came out of my mouth, followed by our loud laughter. The shared laughter and understanding have been a constant in our friendship.

Serving alongside Alder Bennett has been a journey that has turned into a sisterhood of deep respect, shared purpose, and values. From late-night calls to quiet moments of encouragement, we have supported each other through the highs and lows of public life. Juliana, your strength has lifted me more than I can count, and your courage has inspired me to regain my voice.

When you speak about housing—about density, dignity, and access—it is not coming from a distant policy nerd but from someone who has *felt* the impact of exclusion and housing insecurity and wants something better for all of us. Your passionate plea is a vision of the future of this growing city, a call for belonging in a place that is not so loving of a black woman, and a blueprint for real change. Thank you, Juliana!

I don't want to regret not taking this moment to acknowledge the whole sisterhood—a Sisterhood of four: Alder Bennett, Alder Conklin, Alder Currie, and I. You have enriched my life! Your voices, your truths, your fire—it matters. Your legacy is in every corner of this community, every conversation you started, every young girl who sees herself in you, and every neighborhood where you intentionally prioritized marginalized humans and made them feel seen and heard. Together, we have shown that people from different walks of life, cultural backgrounds, perspectives, and languages can achieve great things when working together toward common goals.

Thank you for showing us what brave, compassionate leadership looks like. Thank you for your friendship, your trust, and our sisterhood. You have made my life, my family's life, and this city better.

Yesterday, when Jael asked if today would be emotional, I responded, "I won't miss you". My experience these past 2 years tells me that the bond we formed as public servants will continue. For you, our home has a revolving door where the gringo and I will always welcome you.

Thank you all for your service! I will see you soon, at the beginning of our next journey.

Yannette Figueroa Cole
Council President