

# Campos ends decades-spanning political career

*Board of Supervisors*  
At final board meeting, three-term supervisor says he'll miss 'the people' most

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SANTA CRUZ — Asked Tuesday, moments after he presided over his last board of supervisors meeting, what he'd miss and Tony Campos didn't miss a beat.

"The people," he said. "They're the ones who made the job fun."

Campos has served three terms, 12

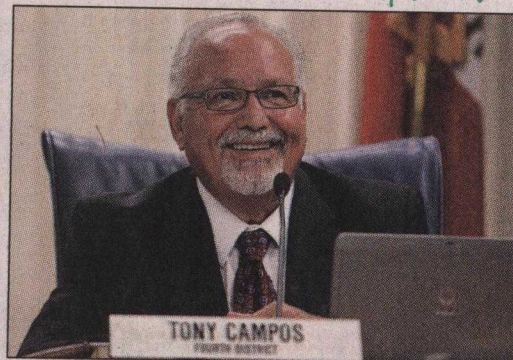
years on the county board. His political career reaches back to the 1980s when he won the first of several terms on the Watsonville City Council. He worked alongside people as diverse as conservative "old guard" Watsonville leaders like the late Betty Murphy and progressives such as union organizer Oscar Rios on the council. His terms as supervisor coincided with those of the late Mardi Wormhoudt, current Superior Court

Judge Jeff Almquist and veteran Jan Beautz.

He had praise for them all, and said he considered them friends.

He's met several U.S. presidents and California governors. His relationship with former Monterey Bay Area congressman and now CIA Director Leon Panetta earned him a tour of the intel-

SEE CAMPOS ON B3



Tony Campos was praised by his colleagues during his last meeting as the District 4 supervisor Tuesday.

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## CAMPOS

Continued from B1

ligence agency's headquarters.

But ask him what he's most proud of, and he'll talk about helping get a soccer field built for the young people who hung out at the Pajaro River levee and a Christmas canned food drive he spearheaded back in the 1980s.

"I've been very fortunate," Campos said. "My life has been really, really great."

Campos was born in Watsonville, where his parents settled after working in citrus orchards in Southern California. Like many Mexican immigrants before and after him, once in the Pajaro Val-

ley, Campos' father worked in strawberries. Campos worked loading lettuce onto freight cars as a young man. Later he became a successful real estate broker, and served on city commissions before his election as the first Latino to the Watsonville City Council in 1986.

Campos is ceding the supervisor's seat to Greg Caput, who narrowly defeated him in the Nov. 2 election. Campos' last meeting Tuesday was marked by tributes from the people he worked with, the people he helped.

They talked about his successful effort to increase Cabrillo College's presence in Watsonville, his support of veterans and working people. They recalled how quickly he was able to get a state

emergency declaration during wildland fires two years ago, and how he pushed to improve South County access to the courts. They noted his compassion, his thoughtfulness. County Clerk Gail Pellerin mentioned that he often brought in food and chocolate for the staff.

He was called a statesman, a diplomat, a strong advocate for the Pajaro Valley while working to heal an historic rift between the northern and southern ends of the county.

"He set a high standard for

all of us," said Supervisor Neal Coonerty.

A dozen staff members from Si Se Puede, a residential treatment program in Watsonville, came to thank Campos for his support over the years. Director Jorge Sanchez said Campos would stop by from time to time to see how residents were doing.

"A lot of times, people don't know the impact people have just by caring about people," Sanchez said.

Sentinel staff writer Kimberly White contributed to this report.