



From left: Susan Bursk of Council District 5 District Director, with Commissioner Low.



A farewell sign for Commissioner Ronald Low.



From left: Chris Low (Ron's son), Commissioner Low, Cameron Low (Ron's son) and Wanda Denson-Low (Ron's wife).



From left: Debbie Kindred, Diana Williams, Commissioner Low and Geraldine Rodriguez.



A farewell embrace between John Reamer, Bureau Director Contract Administration, and Commissioner Low.



A business colleague wishes Commissioner Low farewell.

# Goodbye to Low

## ■ Pioneering Commissioner Ronald Low leaves the Board of Public Works.

Story and photos by Angel Gomez, Member Services Manager

**PUBLIC WORKS** — Friends, family and others bade farewell to Commissioner Ronald Low as he leaves the Board of Public Works.

The reception was held in City Hall Hearing Room 350 Aug. 8.

Commissioner Low was appointed to the Board of Public Works by Mayor James K. Hahn in October 2001. This appointment followed a brief stint in the private sector as a consultant, handling governmental affairs and providing legal advice on affordable housing matters.

Low was the first Chinese American to serve on the Board of Public Works, the City's only full-time policy making commission, during its 98-year history. He, along with the four other members of the Board, serve jointly as general manager of the Department of Public Works, the City's third largest municipal agency.

The Department, responsible for construction, maintenance and operation of the City's public facilities and infrastructure, employs more than 5,000 personnel and has an annual budget of more than \$1 billion.

As a Board Commissioner, Low's duties involved a variety of assignments focusing on litigation, procurement and subcontracting opportunities, community outreach and participation, and environmental concerns.

"One of my main goals as a Commissioner" Low said, "[was] to ensure that our vital City services are delivered in an efficient, equitable and balanced manner throughout the City. I also want to make sure that our department reaches out to the public to get as much of their input and participation as possible in the development and delivery of public facilities and infrastructure projects.

"Another goal [was] to promote services and infrastructure projects that will address some of our environmental concerns like improving water and air quality, increasing water conservation, and reducing pollutants from getting into our various water bodies.

"Finally, I [wanted] to make sure that minority, women and other small businesses have an opportunity to compete for our contracting dollars," Low added.

He was responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Bureau of Contract Administration. The duties of that Bureau include administering minority, women and other business enterprise subcontractor outreach programs for the Department; equal employment opportunity/affirmative action for City contracts; state and federal prevailing wage laws for public works construction contracts, and City-wide certification of minority, women, other and disadvantaged business enterprises. Low's Bureau assignments also included serving as backup Commissioner in the operations of the Bureau of Sanitation focusing on storm water and water quality issues.

Commissioner Low, who at one point was under consideration for an appointment to the State Court Bench, served as the Board's lead man on all legal issues affecting the Department. He also conducted hearings on sewer service charges involving commercial and industrial projects, subcontractor substitution requests on construction projects already underway, and helped mediate miscellaneous disputes.

Commissioner Low served as Department liaison to the offices of the Seventh and Eleventh and Fourteenth Council Districts as well as their respective Neighborhood Councils, the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, the Community Redevelopment Agency and the Departments of General Services and Transportation.

His special assignments included chairing the interdepartmental Oversight Committee for the \$68 million Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway Project, and serving as a member of the Administrative Oversight Committee for Proposition O, the clean beaches and water bill that was passed in the 2004 November general election, and the Settlement Agreement Review Committee for the EPA/Santa Monica Baykeeper lawsuit.

Commissioner Low also served on the Construction Industry Advisory Committee, the Lincoln Corridor Task Force, the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, and the Citywide Economic Development Cabinet.

Prior to going into private industry as a consultant, Commissioner Low spent 11 years as a deputy City attorney in the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office. As a deputy City attorney, he served as head of litigation for the Community Redevelopment Agency, consulting with the Mayor's Office, City Council and the CRA Board of Commissioners on legal issues relating to redevelopment, land use, contracts and condemnation law.

As the CRA's head of litigation, he supervised all of its litigation matters, including decisions to file or defend actions, proposed litigation and trial strategies and conducted settlement negotiations. During this time he also led the City's \$80 million relocation and land acquisition effort for the Staples Center.

Before joining the CRA in 1995, he worked in the City Attorney's Criminal Division with duties that included prosecuting defendants charged with misdemeanor crimes, as well as receiving special assignments to handle violent crimes, stalking and child and spousal abuse cases. Also during his tenure with the City Attorney's Office, he successfully handled one case, in its entirety, all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

Before coming to the City Attorney's Office in 1989, Low practiced civil litigation with two Los Angeles law firms over a span of five years, litigating cases in both state and federal courts.

In 1978, Low was appointed by California's Lieutenant Governor as executive director of the State Youth Commission, where he directed and coordinated the affairs of the Commission. Commissioner Low has worked on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and the State Capitol in Sacramento bringing his experience in State and Federal government with him to the Board.



From left: John Reamer, Bureau Director Contract Administration, with Commissioner Low.

Low is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, where he received his bachelor's degree in criminology with honors in 1973. He received his Master's degree in social work from California State University, Sacramento, in 1975. Then, he graduated with honors from Howard University School of Law in 1983, with a degree in law.

He was admitted to the California State Bar in 1985 and is a member of the Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA), the Association of Trial Lawyers of America (ATLA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) and several other legal associations.

He is a former member of the Board of Trustees of LACBA and the Board of Governors of NAPABA. He has also served as Treasurer of the NAPABA Law Foundation, which he helped create, and President of the Southern California Chinese Lawyer's Association. He has also served on the National Board of the Council on Legal Education Opportunities.

A resident of Los Angeles for the past 20 years, Low has worked extensively with the local Asian-Pacific American community, in addition to all his professional activities. Moreover, Low has published a case study on the plight of the Amerasian: "No Child Should be Without Love and Protection: The Legal Problems of Amerasians."

Commissioner Low is not only an author but a college instructor as well, having taught various courses in social work at California State University, Sacramento.

The Club congratulates Commissioner Low on his distinguished service to the City, and thanks Diana Williams for her assistance with this story.

## Station 77 Dedication Coming

### ■ Fire Station 77 dedication rescheduled for Sept. 17.

**FIRE DEPT** — The public is invited to the formal dedication of the new Fire Station 77 in Sun Valley, which is already in operation.

The dedication ceremony is set for 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 17, at the Station, 9224 Sunland Blvd. in Sun Valley.

Expected to attend are civic and community leaders, including Fire Chief William Bamattre.

All members of the community are warmly welcomed to join the Department for this public event.



From left: Commissioner Yolanda Fuentes, Commissioner Valerie Shaw, Chris Low (Ron's son), Commissioner Low, Cameron Low (Ron's son), Wanda Denson-Low (Ron's wife), and Cynthia M. Ruiz, President, Board of Public of Public Works.

