

AGENDA MATERIAL

DATE 10/20/20 ITEM NO. RA 12

Chairman Valadez, I rise today in recognition of Pima County Supervisor Richard Elias for his dedication to our community. Richard sadly passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on March 28, 2020.

Richard was a fifth-generation Tucson native, with an unmatched love for Southern Arizona; its people and its environment. His parents, Albert M. Elias, a strong supporter of labor and a community leader, and Viola Blaine, instilled a set of values that guided Richard in his professional and personal life. Those values included compassion and a dedication to serving others.

Richard represented Pima County District Five since his appointment to the seat in 2002. Prior to that, he worked for Pima County, Chicanos por la Causa, and the City of South Tucson where he advocated for affordable housing and working families.

He graduated from the University of Arizona with a degree in history. Richard always drew upon his heritage and storytelling to provide a more holistic perspective to issues. He was a proud steward of the Old Pueblo.

During his public service career, Richard was never afraid to take a stand, even if it meant standing alone. Richard spoke his truth to power as a lifelong progressive Democrat. While he was principled in his beliefs, he never shied away from a difficult conversation. He earned the respect of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

For over 18 years, Richard was a steady force on the Board of Supervisors where he left a large footprint. He continued the work to preserve one of our greatest assets, our environment, through his advocacy of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and of protecting our precious desert waterways. He was a staunch and effective proponent of affordable housing development and reinvesting in established neighborhoods, of fighting for equitable access to healthcare, and of promoting the welfare of immigrants. He, like his Dad, was a union man

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at heart and he fought stridently for the rights and values of working families.

Richard spent his last days working tirelessly to address the COVID-19 pandemic in Pima County. May it serve as a reminder that for Richard the well-being and safety of his constituents was always his priority.

Our community has lost a kind, generous soul and a fighter for social justice, the environment and working people. I submit this statement with great sorrow at the loss of a life-long friend and someone who understood the complexities of devoting a life to public service.

My condolences are with his wife Emily and daughter Luz, the rest of his family, staff, friends, and extended community during this difficult time. May we all continue to be inspired by Richard's tireless work and take his creed as our own, "Resist. Much Love."