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Former Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer Sworn in as California Senator

By Laurie Snyder



Steve Glazer with his wife, Melba Muscarolas, as he was sworn in May 28 by Gov. Jerry Brown Photo Lorie Shelley, Senate Rules Photography

On the eve of two life-changing moments, Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer tweeted a quote from Oscar Wilde: "Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much." After tendering his resignation from the Orinda City Council and his role as Orinda's Mayor on May 28, he was then officially sworn in the same day by Gov. Jerry Brown on the floor of the California Senate at 9:35 a.m., becoming the newest senator to represent California's District 7 communities, including the Lamorinda tri-cities, most of Contra Costa County, and key segments of Alameda County.

Glazer won his seat after surviving a hotly contested March primary against fellow Democrats, Assembly Member Susan Bonilla and former Assembly Member Joan Buchanan, and an even more sizzling May runoff against Bonilla. In the May race - understatedly described by the Los Angeles Times as "acrimonious and expensive" - Glazer bested Bonilla with 54.5 percent of the vote - garnering 68,996 of the ballots cast to her 57,491.

In his letter of resignation to Orinda City Clerk Michele Olsen, Glazer described his decade-plus city leadership experience as "enjoyable and fulfilling," and termed fellow council members and

city commissioners "accomplished" and staff "exceptional in their professionalism." He also cited the city's balanced budget and "citizen approval of key elements of our road and drain replacement plan" as the collective achievements of which he was most proud during his tenure. (See the story, "Orinda's Mayoral and City Council Succession Planning," on next page.)

During his swearing-in speech, which was broadcast on cable live on The California Channel and streamed online from the California Senate floor, Glazer thanked his wife and children, his teachers for the difference they made in his life, and his late parents for "their gentle guidance." He then reflected on how time spent picking fruit on a kibbutz in Israel fed his passion for public service, while growing up in Sacramento and working minimum wage jobs just a few miles from the Capitol sparked his lifelong preoccupation with politics. Even as a 13-year-old, "elections mattered."

The California Senate's proceedings - opened that morning by a prayer offered by Rabbi Judy Shanks of Lafayette's Temple Isaiah that encouraged California's elected officials to treat each other with respect and listen more intently to one another - then moved on. During his first official action on the Senate floor, Glazer voted in favor of Senate Bill 413, which "makes it a crime, punishable as an infraction, for a person to commit certain acts on or in a facility or vehicle of a public transportation system, including disturbing another person by loud or unreasonable noise or selling or peddling any goods, merchandise, property, or services of any kind whatsoever on the facilities, vehicle, or property of a public transportation system," and which would also make it an infraction "to fail to yield seating reserved for an elderly or disabled person."

SB 413 passed, as did several others supported by Glazer on his first day, including SB 482 (improving the state's CURES database to tighten handling of controlled substances and reduce

"doctor shopping" for pain prescriptions), SB 516 (improving motorist aid services on freeways), SB 570 (improving the clarity of data breach notifications to consumers), SB 600 (banning discrimination based on citizenship, language or immigration status), and SB 585 (improving collection of child support from delinquent payees).

After the Senate adjourned, California Senate Pro Tempore Kevin de Leon reported a "rager" of a party in room 211, as a reception welcoming Glazer to the Senate kicked into high gear.

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