

CONTACT: GLORIA ALLRED
(323) 653-6530
Email: gallred@amglaw.com

Statement of Irene McCormack Jackson

Good morning,

And it is a good morning for me. I'm glad to be bringing this chapter of my life to a close. Unlike the last time I sat next to Ms. Allred, I'm in a much better frame of mind. And it feels good.

I'm glad this is over. The more we can put the former mayor's administration into the past the better. It is fitting that the approval of my settlement came the day before the election for a new mayor, and I thank the City Council for approving the settlement.

The emotional toll from the time I joined the mayor's office until today was more than I had reckoned. But I've been buoyed by the support of family, friends, and people I met along the way.

My thanks go to this defender of women who is sitting by my side, Gloria Allred. She and her partners, Nathan Goldberg, Michael Maroko and John West, have been supportive realists who have made me feel like their only client every day. Thank you, Gloria.

My love and thanks go also to my children – Vanessa Bowman and Lydia Jackson – two remarkable young women who are just great. Their love, laughter and comfort are their mom's lifeblood. I always feel their arms around my shoulders.

I also relied on my family -- my mom and dad, and my four brothers – especially my brother Michael who as the only sibling living in San Diego, has stood by my side since the day I left the mayor's office and who spent days collecting signatures for the former mayors' recall. Thank you.

Also, to my friends, thank you for getting me out of the house, talking, walking, laughing, reading books, drinking coffee, window shopping and sharing. You were right. I don't make a good hermit.

And to my dear friend, Donna Frye, whose belief in the ultimate goodness of the universe and the serendipity of life provides smiles every day. I came through this much stronger because of her friendship. Her last day at the mayor's office was so sad for me, and starkly showed how obtuse and obstructive the office atmosphere was. Thanks for resigning, Donna. It showed me the way out.

It was really scary to go public about how the former mayor sexually harassed me. I didn't know what to expect. I remember walking back to my office afterward, my eyes on the ground and my shoulders hunched. I cringed when people recognized me and waved me down or called my name. I was wrong. To all the women that I met in elevators, at sandwich shops, at baseball games, on the beach, in the grocery store, in my neighborhood, at the nail salon, on a hike, or at a rest stop in central California: your thanks meant the world to me when I just wanted to be reclusive. Your words of support gave me hope and helped me heal because you believed me. Your stories showed me that the abuse of power is prevalent everywhere and manifests itself in many ways. To those who shared their stories of sexual harassment and abuse, I believe you. There is nothing you did to provoke it. It just was. And I believe you.

To the men I met and who wrote to me or stopped me on the sidewalk, in the store, in a restaurant, at the park or at the gas station: Thank you. You make your mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, brothers, sons and fathers proud. You stick up for your loved ones. Several of you told me of the trying times the women in your lives had gone through. I'm grateful that you believed them.

Finally, I send my love and regards to the brave women who followed me into the public spotlight last summer and told their disturbing tales about being sexually harassed by the former mayor. The almost daily news conferences over several weeks was stunning and I watched with tears in my eyes. I haven't met most of you but your courage is always with me. I know how difficult and harsh it was to go public against a figure who held the power of political office for so long. Together, we made a difference. I stand in solidarity with you.

I don't know what I will be doing next. But whatever it is, I want it to involve writing and I want my work to be a benefit to others. I am very grateful for the love and support I experienced over the last seven months. I want to pass it along and make a difference in my next endeavor.

Thank you.

Irene McCormack Jackson

Represented By Gloria Allred

Attorney at Law

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