



**Office of the Mayor
City of Los Angeles**

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA

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MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA APPOINTS NEW COMMISSIONERS

LOS ANGELES - Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa today announced four new commission appointments: Christine Essel to the Board of Airport Commissioners; Grace Yoo to the Board of Transportation Commissioners; Tonantzin Carmelo to the Native American Indian Commission; and Andrea Alarcon to the Board of Taxicab Commissioners.

Christine Essel – Board of Airport Commissioners

Christine Essel was appointed to the Board of Airport Commissioners. Essel, formerly the Senior Vice President of Government and Community Affairs for Paramount Pictures, brings more than 30 years of experience in business and civic leadership. During her years at the studio, she was charged with overseeing its real estate development activities and public affairs agenda at the state and local levels.

A leader in civic life, Essel has played a prominent role in advancing the interests of the entertainment industry in her recent position as Chair of the California Film Commission, a post she held for nine consecutive years. She continues to remain a member of the Commission. Also, having served on the FilmLA Board since its inception, she will begin her term as First Vice-President in 2009. FilmLA strives to support and retain film, television and commercial production in the Los Angeles region. She has represented the interests of the Southern California business community having served these past two years as Chair of Central City Association. In addition, she has served as Vice-Chair of the California Workforce Investment Board since 2000 and was recently appointed to the California Tourism and Entertainment Advisory Committee.

Essel has been honored as the City of Hope Woman of the Year and has received the Community Leader Award from the National Women's Political Caucus. Essel received her B.S. from the University of Redlands in Business Administration.

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Grace Yoo – Board of Transportation Commissioners

Grace Yoo was appointed to the Board of Transportation Commissioners. Yoo currently serves as the executive director of the Korean American Coalition in Los Angeles, a non-profit organization that promotes awareness of issues of concern to and represents the interests of the Los Angeles area Korean American Community. Prior to joining the Korean American Coalition, Yoo served as executive director of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the nation's only national bar association representing the interests of Asian Pacific American attorneys.

Yoo, a certified mediator, previously worked as an attorney in private practice and was appointed by the Superior Court of the County of Los Angeles to represent abused and neglected children in the Edelman Children's Court. Yoo received a Bachelor's Degree in political science from the University of California, Riverside and is a graduate of Seton Hall University School of Law. Ms. Yoo currently resides in Silver Lake.

Tonantzin Carmelo - Native American Indian Commission

Tonantzin Carmelo was appointed to the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission. Carmelo, a professional actor and certified cultural resources monitor, served for five years as a cultural resources monitor at the Gabrielino/Tongva Tribe at numerous archeological and development sites in Los Angeles and Orange counties. In 2006, Carmelo received a Screen Actors Guild nomination for best actress in a television miniseries for TNT's Into the West.

Carmelo is active in the Native American community, serving on the board of advisors of Native Voices at the Autry National Center of the American West; on the Hollywood American Indian Committee of the Screen Actors Guild; on the President's National Task Force on American Indians of the Screen Actors Guild; and on the Gabrielino/Tongva Tribe's Constitution and Citizenship committees. Carmelo graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a B.A. in Environmental Analysis and Design.

Andrea Alarcon – Board of Taxicab Commissioners

Andrea Alarcon was appointed to the Board of Taxicab Commissioners. Alarcon currently serves as the director of the Los Angeles Executive Office-Southern California Region and Special Assistant to Attorney General Bill Lockyer, where she is the lead on matters relating to violence against women, anti-gang violence efforts and immigrant assistance.

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Alarcon previously served as the executive director of Women Advancing the Valley through Education and Empowerment, where she secured a deal with California Housing and Community Development to construct a first-of-its-kind in the country on-site child development center. Alarcon has also served as a hate crimes specialist with the United States Department of Justice and is a graduate of the Tools for Tolerance program of the National Institute Against Hate Crimes and Terrorism at the Museum of Tolerance.

Alarcon graduated from Georgetown University with a double major in English and Government and a graduate business administration certificate. Alarcon is a resident of Sylmar.

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