

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Proclamation

REMEMBERING MARY HAMMER (1937-2024)

WHEREAS, Mary Hammer's deep affection of the San Lorenzo Valley and its redwoods, river and rural lifestyle was shaped from infancy during summers spent at her grandparents' cabin in Brookdale; and

WHEREAS, born in 1937 as Mary Elizabeth Mehan in San Francisco, she graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a degree in education and traveled to Germany to teach, where she met her future husband, Joe Hammer, with whom she returned to the Brookdale cabin in 1965, and later settled in Boulder Creek and adopted their children, Eric and Lisa;

WHEREAS, after teaching in San Lorenzo Valley schools, Mary became a leading activist in the San Lorenzo Valley for environmental and other civic causes, including helping to found the San Lorenzo River and Valley Citizens for Clean Water group, campaigning for SLV Water Board and County Supervisor candidates, and serving on the County Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, Mary co-founded the Valley Women's Club of Santa Cruz County with eight other women who first met in her home, and nurtured the organization during the 45 years since then, during which it has been a leading force for watershed protection, limited development, individual empowerment, and community education; and

WHEREAS, Mary was a leading figure in the community response to the 1982 Love Creek flood, establishing a disaster response center that grew into the Valley Resource Center, which became a federally recognized nonprofit organization led by Mary as its executive director, a position that provided her a platform for greater advocacy for neighborhood disaster preparedness that led to today's Community Emergency Response Teams; and

WHEREAS, after Valley Resource Center changed its name to Mountain Community Resources, the organization expanded to become a family resource center in addition to an emergency response and readiness site, and eventually became part of the countywide Community Bridges nonprofit network; and

WHEREAS, Mountain Community Resources annually presents the Mary Hammer Green Heart Award to recognize her exceptional and unprecedented record of service, which has contributed greatly to preserving the rural, community-focused nature of the San Lorenzo Valley.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bruce McPherson, Santa Cruz County Fifth District Supervisor, do hereby honor Mary Hammer and encourage all residents of Santa Cruz County to join me in celebrating the extraordinary legacy of her life, which will inspire generations to come.



Bruce McPherson
Member, Board of Supervisors

December 21, 2024

Date