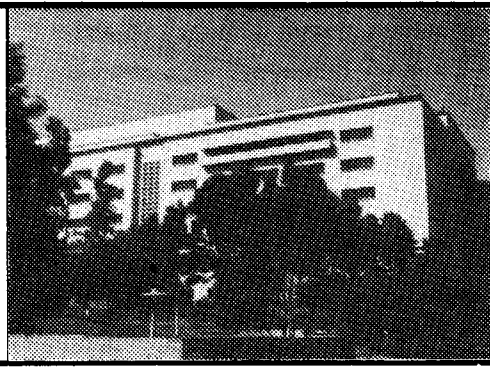




Civic Center NEWS Source

A Publication of the Metropolitan News Company



Vol. 1, No. 9 210 S. Spring St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90012 Monday, March 4, 1991 Main number: (213) 628-4384 25 Cents

Spotlight on...Los Angeles City Councilman Joel Wachs

Veteran Lawmaker Becomes Avid Art Advocate

By DAVID WATSON
Staff Writer

With 20 years of experience on the Los Angeles City Council, Joel Wachs has learned that patience and tenacity are virtues that can pay off in political life.

Last week he was able to enjoy one of those payoffs when the council gave final approval to Los Angeles' ambitious new "Percent for Art" plan. For the Second District councilman, it was the culmination of a five year campaign of public and behind-the-scenes advocacy.

"He's a very effective councilman," Council President John Ferraro comments. "When Joel gets his mind set on something, he doesn't give up until he gets it accomplished."

Convincing his colleagues to establish the nation's biggest program of municipal support for the arts at a time when the ability of cities to provide basic services has increasingly been called into question may not have been easy. But Wachs believes it is a decision that will ultimately pay big dividends.

The veteran councilman says: "I showed them it was something we couldn't afford not to do. The arts are really essential to the economic vitality of the city and to the quality of life in the city. And those are two things that elected officials should be concerned about."

Final Approval

Wachs' brainchild, the Los Angeles Endowment for the Arts, is expected to boost the amount the city spends on the arts each year from about \$4 million to nearly \$25 million. The final phase of the program, approved Friday, calls for commercial developers to set aside one percent of the value of all projects costing over \$500,000 for "cultural and artistic facilities, services, and community amenities which will serve the development project and its users."

Developers can spend that amount themselves—subject to city approval of their proposals—or deposit the money into a trust fund which will be administered jointly by the city's Cultural Affairs Department and private arts organizations. Single family residential development is excluded from the set-aside requirement.

Wachs says the program is long overdue.

"The arts have done a lot more for Los Angeles than Los Angeles has done for the arts," he explains. "Only now are we beginning to recognize that and make the investment that we should have been making all along."

He adds: "The great cities in the world have always been centers of culture as well as commerce. I think it's a great way of bringing the people of the city together."



WACHS

Third District Councilwoman Joy Picus predicts that the Arts Endowment will prove to be the "outstanding achievement" of Wachs' long council career.

"It's going to be a wonderful thing for our city," she declares. "And it's been his project—he deserves all the credit for it."

If the program, which derives additional funding from similar one percent set-asides from city capital improvements and from the city's current 12½ percent transient occupancy, or hotel, tax, can succeed in improving the cultural reputation and atmosphere of the city, many agree it will also generate an economic payoff for Los Angeles.

"Studies have shown a very, very useful connection between destination marketing and the arts," Michael Collins, vice-president of public affairs for the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau, says. The bureau also receives about half its funding from the hotel tax.

Local Economy

Wachs point out that a big chunk of the Los Angeles economy already revolves around creativity and the arts. The motion picture industry is the city's second largest, he says, and tourism ranks just behind it.

He adds: "Most of the industries that are really important to Los Angeles rely on creative people as their natural resource. These industries are clean, they are environmentally sound. There are as many creative people living here as in any city in the country. That's what we ought to use, that's what we ought to take advantage of."

"I look at this arts endowment as really encouraging those people to live and work in our city. And we benefit from it."

In encouraging Los Angeles to make culture and the arts a more important part of its life, Wachs is really suggesting that the rest of the city follow his example. Wachs—who says that "except for a Hanukkah present from my mother" he lives almost entirely on his council salary—has for years spent about a fifth of his income on collecting art.

He explains: "I use it to buy the work of very young artists whose work is very inexpensive, who interest me and who I can also help by supporting them at a young age."

He relates art collecting to his duties as a public official by saying:

"To be interested in what creative minds are doing now, what creative people are doing at the moment, is to me very exciting and it ties in very much to what I do in my job, which is really reflecting and responding to my culture and my society."

The 52-year-old bachelor councilman might never have awakened to the cultural values that have become so important to him if he hadn't left Los Angeles after college to go to Harvard Law School.

Harvard's Influence

He remembers: "I had almost no contact with the arts prior to going to Harvard. My first day there they put me in a dormitory with this guy from Amherst. We had a radio, and I wanted to put on rock and roll and rhythm and blues and he always wanted

to listen to opera. I had never heard an opera."

In his second year at Harvard, he rented a house with five other students. The councilman recounts:

"Many of them had gone to Princeton and Yale and they wanted to go to the symphony. I went, 'Symphony? Are you kidding?' But then I started going with them and I loved it.

"And I started going to the theater and museums. I really believe that being in Boston in that environment was one of the things that most stimulated my interest in the arts."

Born in Scranton, Pa., Wachs moved to California with his family when he was 10 years old and grew up in "an area called Vermont Knolls," which he describes as extending from 79th to 83rd Streets between Vermont and Normandie. His father and his mother's parents were immigrants.

"They were self-made people," Wachs reflects. "Their whole goal was that we would get an education and have a better life."

His father, along with other family members, had a chain of inexpensive ladies' clothing stores. Wachs attended Horace Mann Junior High and Washington High School.

Student Body President

He was a political science major at UCLA, and was elected to several offices there including student body president his senior year.

"I had been running for office ever since being elected blackboard monitor in the second grade," Wachs recalls.

He graduated from UCLA in 1961, and remembers the student unrest of the later 1960s as something "we were just at the forefront of."

He explains: "We were the era where it was just beginning to change. I remember the issue when I was in college was could you discuss these things, were they 'off-campus' issues or were they legitimate subjects of debate. Traditionally broader societal issues were not considered within the parameters of student government and students began to question that."

He says he enjoyed his years at UCLA, and when he decided to go to law school, UCLA would have been the logical choice. But during his senior year there, Franklin Murphy was appointed chancellor.

"He became the person who meant the most to me in my academic career," the councilman recalls. "He was the person who advised me to go away to law school."

Murphy, now retired as chairman of the board of the Times-Mirror Company, says he gave the same advice to all the students who asked him about graduate school plans.

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Mon Kees gets a 4-star rating in a new restaurant column
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WACHS

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"At that period in a person's life, it's a great opportunity to explore different experiences, different points of view," he says.

The former chancellor remembers Wachs well.

"He was very energetic, very bright," he recalls. "I was not surprised when he went into politics."

After completing his law degree, Wachs spent a year in New York City earning a master's in taxation from NYU. Though he enjoyed the flavor of the East coast, Wachs says, he never considered not returning to Los Angeles. Upon his return here, he signed on with the firm of Gray, Binkley & Pfaelzer—which soon merged to become Kadison, Pfaelzer, Woodard & Quinn—and practiced as a tax attorney in Los Angeles for five years.

He recounts:

"To be totally honest, I didn't love practicing tax law. Basically my job was tax planning, and so the result of my efforts was finding ways to save rich people money. And I didn't find that satisfying."

His choice to go to law school, Wachs recalls, never reflected a real commitment to practicing law as a career.

"I was really more interested in something more publicly oriented," he says. "If I had been five years younger I might not have ever practiced law. I might have used my law school training and gone to work for someone like Ralph Nader."

Duo Prompted Decision

The opportunity to make a change came, he says, rather suddenly in 1971. Two UCLA seniors were the "most influential" in his decision to run for the City Council, he recalls.

Wachs says he met Harry Sloan and Mark Armbruster doing campaign work for then-Rep. Alphonso Bell, a westside Los Angeles Republican. At the time, he recalls, he didn't even know who the City Council incumbent, James B. Potter, was.

Potter drew 14 opponents in the primary amid charges he had aided a contributor in obtaining a zoning change for an unpopular development project.

"They brought the Potter situation to my attention," Wachs says. "They told me how much trouble he was in."

Sloan and Armbruster were the "creative people" in the campaign. Wachs paid them only \$500 each, but they were able to negotiate course credit in their UCLA political science programs for some of the campaign work. The candidate's parents worked seven days weeks, his mother at headquarters, his father handing out flyers urging residents to "Vote for My Son Joel" at supermarkets and freeway off ramps.

Bruce Corwin, now president of Metropolitan Theaters Corporation, was co-chairman of Wachs' campaign.

"It was the best campaign—the most fun campaign—I've ever been involved in," Corwin recalls. "There were no paid political consultants. The whole campaign was staffed by volunteers who knew Joel from his days as student body president at UCLA."

Wachs himself went door to door for five months. To get into a runoff with Potter he spent only \$24,000, almost half of which was borrowed from his parents, he recalls. He ran as an outsider, and, he says, he was.

No Ties

Wachs declares:

"I had never been in City Hall until I got elected. I didn't even know where it was. I had no obligations to anybody, other than to my mother and father that I should be a good boy."

He remembers that Sloan and Armbruster became the two youngest deputies at City Hall. Each later went on to law school.

After two decades at City Hall, Wachs still cherishes the outsider image. In 1986, he got a chance to become an outsider again when a council reappror-

tionment battle stripped him of more than 90 percent of his district.

Under a court mandate to create a 70 percent Latino district, the council first created a plan that would have placed incumbents John Ferraro and Michael Woo in the same district. When First District Councilman Howard Finn suddenly died, Ferraro and Woo saw a way out of their predicament—at Wachs' expense.

Wachs remembers:

"It happened overnight, and it was six months before election day. I had to go out and earn the respect of a whole new group of people immediately, overnight. So it was sink or swim. And that experience was probably one of the best things that ever happened to me. It was the only thing that was equivalent to the first time I ran for office."

The new district meandered oddly from Wachs' Studio City home to Sunland-Tujunga, in the far northeast corner of the city's San Fernando Valley. It included some of Los Angeles' most rural and most conservative communities.

The liberal—but registered Republican—councilman took on the new district as a challenge. But it also turned out to be an education.

Sunland-Tujunga Affinity

He recounts:

"I love Sunland-Tujunga now. It's a very special place. It's so hard to believe that in the second largest city in the United States a person of average means could have a home with a horse in the back yard and mountains for scenery. And this is not a rich, wealthy community. This is not the horsey set, these are just people who like a lifestyle that is still part of something that is almost impossible to find in a major urban area."

His own anger at the change in his district mirrored the anger in the community and created an immediate bond with his new constituents, Wachs explains.

"They saw the City Council just carving up Howard's district to get themselves out of a mess. One of the reasons we were able to get along so well and establish a rapport is because they knew that I wasn't a party to that. They didn't like what happened and I didn't like what happened and we said okay let's show them downtown. It was being an outsider again in that respect."

But Wachs was now an outsider with an insider's connections. Shortly before the 1987 election he arranged a county music festival in Lake View Terrace. Charlie Pride and Randy Travis performed, and a large banner welcomed visitors to "Joel Wachs' 'L.A. Country Scene.'"

His election opponents cried foul, claiming misuse of city funds, though the city paid only for police protection and liability insurance, with corporate sponsors paying most of the costs.

Wachs says:

"I just wanted to get right out there and learn about and respond to my new district. I had never listened to country music. Again, it's the new, the different. You put yourself in a different environment and you get exposed to new things, to different things. And you grow from it. That's what living is about."

Some in Wachs' new district have found him inaccessible on local issues.

"He seems very much disenchanted with this little piece of North Hollywood he has inherited," Betty DeMille of the North East Valley Residents Association complains. She calls him "absolutely a nonresponsive person."

NEVRA has sought Wachs' help in funding construction of a sound wall to protect homes from freeway noise.

Peter Lynch, a consultant and former city planner who will be one of Wachs' two opponents in next month's primary election, says he would like to return district politics to the days of Howard Finn.

"Councilman Finn was always available," Lynch says.

But Sylvia Gross, vice-president and land use chairperson for the Sunland-Tujunga Association of Residents, says STAR's experience has been "completely contrary" to NEVRA's.

"I'm for the man one thousand percent," she says, remembering when she found herself on Finn's list of people whose calls were never returned.

"It's been like night and day since Councilman Wachs has come on board," STAR board member Joe Downey adds. "We can't say enough about Joel Wachs listening to our concerns."

Attorney Richard Close of Shapiro, Posell & Close in Century City has been president of the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association for 15 years, and dealt with Wachs on development issues before the redistricting. He describes the councilman as "very intelligent, very dedicated, and very concerned about certain issues."

But he adds that Wachs' staff has never been adequate to deal with local concerns.

Close explains:

"If you're concerned about rent control, he gets an A-plus. If you're interested in the arts, he gets an A-plus. But he gets a D-minus if you've got a problem in your neighborhood."

Close contrasts Wachs with the councilman who now represents Sherman Oaks, Zev Yaroslavsky.

"Yaroslavsky is excellent on citywide issues, but he also has excellent staff to handle local issues," Close says.

Many of the accomplishments of which Wachs is proudest on the council have been long-term efforts which have had citywide impact.

He sponsored Los Angeles' AIDS anti-discrimination law, which was one of the first in the country when he proposed it in 1985. A few years earlier he had co-sponsored legislation banning discrimination against homosexuals.

"It was really a matter of education," he reflects. "A lot of the things I have undertaken have tended to be that."

Wachs, who now ranks fourth in seniority on the council, served for two years as its president in the early 1980s. Ferraro recalls him having been a "good president." The current president reflects:

"It's a tough job. Joel did all right. He had other things on his mind."

Ferraro explains that Wachs didn't always start council meetings on time, fostering what he calls a "lax mood."

Pressures of Presidency

Wachs remembers the pressure to be prompt as one of the burdens of the council presidency.

"You have to be there all the time," he says. "And you have to listen to everybody when they talk. It's a lot of work, just physically, being up there."

Wachs won't say how long he expects to remain on the City Council, or what else he might choose to do in the future. While he won't rule out another run for the mayor's office—he was a candidate in 1973, only 18 months after being elected to the council—he says that is no longer a real ambition for him.

Wachs reflects:

"At one time I had a really burning desire to do it, and I don't now. When you hit 50—which I have—you ask yourself, 'Okay, now what do you do with the rest of your life?' I only want to be a councilman if I still find it rewarding, still have an opportunity to accomplish major things. I don't know how I will feel five years from now."

His political horizons are limited by a non-negotiable requirement: he won't leave Los Angeles. That rules out a run for the state Legislature or Congress.

"Living in Sacramento? Ugh!" the councilman comments.

The one position that might entice him to Washington, he says only half seriously, would be with the National Endowment for the Arts. But unless that position unexpectedly opens up, Wachs will have to settle for the role he has carved out for himself as the City Council's in-house arts advocate.

Names in the News

Zolin to Head DMV...Buerk Will Chair County Efficiency Panel ...Sandoval to Stay at YACA

Former Los Angeles Superior Court Executive Officer/County Clerk **Frank Zolin** was appointed Thursday by Gov. **Pete Wilson** as director of the state Department of Motor Vehicles. Zolin, 58, had been executive officer since 1968, and assumed additional duties as county clerk in 1984. He previously worked in the County Administrative Office. If confirmed by the Senate, Zolin will replace **A. A. "Del" Pierce**.

Rancho Palos Verdes resident **Dr. Gunther Buerk** has been selected chairman of the Los Angeles County Economy and Efficiency Commission. Buerk is president of American Consulting Company, a management consulting firm, and is general partner of Fullerton Hoffbrau, a micro-brewery and restaurant established last year. He formerly served as manager of corporate economics and strategic planning for Unocal Oil Company. He was with that firm 14 years. From 1966 to 1969, he managed aircraft electronic support programs for the U.S. Air Force and international airlines while with Garrett Aeresearch. He also directed the design and implementation of computer software and assisted in international marketing for the firm. Buerk was a founding councilman and a former mayor of the City of Ranch Palos Verdes. He has been a member of the Economy and Efficiency Commission since 1981. The commission is charged by the Board of Supervisors to examine any operation of county government and submit to the Board any recommendations for improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Gov. **Pete Wilson** has announced the reappointment of **Joe Sandoval** as secretary of the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency (YACA). Sandoval was first appointed by Gov. **George Deukmejian** in 1988. Sandoval will be in charge of 30,000 employees and a proposed budget of more than \$3 billion as the head of the Department of Youth Authority and the Department of Corrections, the two departments under the YACA's jurisdiction. Sandoval is a 26-year veteran of the Los Angeles Police Department, and has served as chief of the California State Police. He also holds a master's degree in Public Administration. Wilson said that Sandoval shares his philosophy of working with troubled youths early in order to keep them from becoming lifetime prisoners.

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Rona baby

Hollywood reporter Rona Barrett accepts City Council resolution honoring her from Councilman Joel Wachs.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

COUNCILMAN JOEL WACHS
President Pro Tem
Los Angeles City Council

Los Angeles City Councilman Joel Wachs was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, on March 1, 1939. He has lived in Los Angeles since early childhood, attending Horace Mann Junior High and Washington High.

Councilman Wachs was graduated with honors from UCLA where he attained the offices of Freshman Class President, Junior Class President and ultimately, President of the Student Body.

Councilman Wachs received his Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School in 1964, and earned a special Master's degree in tax law the following year at New York University.

Returning to Los Angeles, he quickly achieved the reputation of a leading attorney in the field of tax law, both personal and corporate. He lectured in this subject at the USC Law Center and is an active member of the State Bar Association.

Prior to entering public life, Councilman Wachs served on the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles Urban Project, providing legal services to budding minority enterprises. In addition, he assisted the California Attorney General in legal research projects; served as the Vice President of the UCLA Alumni Association; and Director of the University Camp of the University Religious Conference.

On January 6, 1971, Joel Wachs declared his candidacy for the Los Angeles City Council, stating that "the majority of people have simply lost faith in the ability of their elected officials to deal effectively with the problems confronting us today." He asked voters to "think of the difference a really good man will make"...and they did.

Councilman Wachs was given the highest vote count among 14 candidates in the primary, and was awarded a landslide victory over the incumbent in the general election.

Upon assuming office, he was immediately named Chairman of the City's Revenue and Taxation Committee, and later served as Chairman of the Council's Water and Power Committee, where he succeeded in bringing about major reforms of our municipally owned utilities, including the first independent audit of the DWP's budget. That audit, which is now continuing, resulted in the almost unprecedented denial of several proposed DWP rate increases.

In addition, Councilman Wachs was appointed by Mayor Bradley to the City's Ad Hoc Committees on Energy and Water Conservation, and played a key role in drafting the nation's most successful energy conservation program.

Councilman Wachs also serves as Mayor Bradley's appointee to the Santa Monica Mountain Comprehensive Planning Commission, where he is continuing his long-time efforts to preserve our City's precious natural resources from harmful development.

In 1975, Councilman Wachs was re-elected to a second four-year term by a record margin, receiving 80% of the vote against the combined total of his four opponents.

During his tenure on the Council, Councilman Wachs has become the leading spokesman for our City's senior citizen population, which he claims has been the most neglected group of citizens in our society. Toward that end, the Councilman has helped develop special senior citizen transportation systems, housing projects, crime prevention programs and discount utility rates and tax breaks designed especially for senior citizens.

Councilman Wachs is widely recognized as a leading supporter of the arts in our City, and has authored most of the City's significant legislation designed to support our important arts community as well as our vital audio-visual communications industry. He has recently been appointed Vice-Chairman of the National Task Force on the Arts, and is presently drafting the nation's first comprehensive municipal policy statement on the role of the arts in our cities.

In 1977, Councilman Wachs was unanimously elected President Pro Tempore of the City, and serves as Mayor of the City in the absence of Mayor Bradley and the Council President.

He currently serves as Chairman of the Council's powerful State, County and Federal Affairs Committee, which is responsible for overseeing the City's entire legislative program in both Washington and Sacramento, and also serves on the City's Board of Grants Administration, which is responsible for administering nearly \$700 million of federal and state grant funds.

Throughout all of his varied activities, however, his original campaign stand remains the same: to make government more responsive to the needs of the general public, rather than catering to the demands of its special interests.

COUNCILMAN
JOEL WACHS

NEWS

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WACHS PLUS TRAINING, PLUS TORCH EQUALS OLYMPIC RECORD!

Following an intensive and rigorous training program, Councilman Joel Wachs is ready to run the XXIIIrd Olympiad... as a torchbearer.

Stretching exercises, running wind sprints, proper diet, mental conditioning, all that's behind him as he begins to lace up a pair of running shoes (size 9 ½ EE), slips on his running shorts and top (the Official running togs of the 1984 Olympics!) and concentrates on the real goal...setting an Olympic record running the tough 1 K course along Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood!

The moment of truth ("have I trained enough...will I drop the torch?") begins at 1 P.M. Saturday, July 21, 1984.

The starting point is 8150 Sunset Boulevard (Great Western Savings Bldg.), southwest corner of Sunset and Crescent Heights Boulevards.

MORE

The finish line is 1261 North Fairfax Avenue (St Ambrose Catholic Church), just around the corner and ONE KILOMETER distance from the starting point.

"To carry the Olympic torch, to be a part of this special event is something that everyone dreams about," said Councilman Wachs, "but to participate in the Games that are happening in your own City is doubly exciting. I am looking forward to Saturday.

But equally important is the fact that the funds raised by the L.A.O.O.C. Torch Relay will go to a good cause...helping our young people, through organizations that truly serve our communities and nation. It is an honor to be a part of this classic event."

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