

## EXTENDED BIOGRAPHY AND PERSONAL COMMENTS

### PETER DOUGLAS, CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, 1985-2011

Peter Douglas is the third Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission. He was appointed to his position in mid-1985 after having served as the Commission's Chief Deputy Director for seven years. Before coming to the Commission he worked as a legislative aide to Assembly member Alan Sieroty (D-Beverly Hills). In that capacity, he co-authored Proposition 20 in 1972 which created the Coastal Commission. He also helped to organize the grassroots campaign that secured its overwhelming passage by the voters on 11/7/72. After the November election, he went to work as a consultant for the Assembly Natural Resource Committee and the Select Committee on Coastal Protection. In that capacity he co-drafted the California Coastal Act which, in 1976, was made permanent by the Legislature.

The following year, Peter left the Legislature and was hired as the Coastal Commission's Chief Deputy, a position he held until he was appointed Executive Director in 1985. His 26-year tenure at the Commission is the second-longest of any Executive Director in state history.

Born a Jew in Berlin, Germany, in 1942, Peter sees himself as a very fortunate survivor who is no stranger to adversity and conflict. He immigrated to America from Mexico in the early '50s. A graduate of UCLA, both undergraduate (1965) and graduate (UCLA Law School, 1969), he is an attorney with a background in social and environmental activism before coming to the Commission.

Peter is a devote believer in Joseph Campbell's advice that the way to live one's life is to follow your bliss. His bliss, as well as his passion and avocation are and will continue to be environmental stewardship.

Peter Douglas will retire from his position as Executive Director in November, 2011, for health reasons.

Some of Peter Douglas' additional professional accomplishments include:

- An original member of the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) Science Advisory Board, and appointed by President Clinton to the US Panel on Ocean Exploration that authored *Discovering Earth's Final Frontier: A U.S. Strategy for Ocean Exploration* (October 2000).
- Served on the China-U.S. panel on integrated coastal management, and provided consultation and technical assistance on coastal management issues to other countries including Japan, Turkey and Vietnam.
- Member, National Academy of Sciences Committee on Science and Policy for the Coastal Ocean.
- Member, *H. John Heinz III Center for Science, Economics and the Environment* advisory committee for Sustainable Oceans, Coasts and Waterways Program.

- First recipient of the national Julius A. Stratton "Champion of the Coast" award for leadership in coastal management at Coastal Zone '95, an international, biennial symposium on coastal zone management.
- Participated in drafting the first regulations implementing the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.
- Provided leadership in successful effort to prevent new Federal offshore leasing for oil and gas development on the Outer Continental Shelf in frontier areas lacking necessary onshore infrastructure support.
- Author of numerous articles on coastal conservation, environmental activism and public and private land rights.
- Co-founder and chair of two successful non-profit community organizations and in 1984, as a school board member, co-chaired one of the first successful grassroots campaigns in California to enact a special parcel tax to support local public schools that remains in effect to this day.

Recipient of numerous environmental and public service awards, to name a few:

- National Coast Trail Association Recognition Award (1997)
- CalCoast Friend of the Coast 2000 Award
- The Environmental Defense Center, in association with the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum, League for Coastal Protection, Santa Barbara Channel Keeper, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Natural Resources Defense Council Center for Marine Conservation and Sierra Club (2000)
- Sierra Club Distinguished Service Award (2004)
- The Merle Greene Robertson Award for Service Society (2005)
- Pamela Wright Lloyd Environmental Stewardship Award (2005)
- NOAA, National Marine Sanctuaries Environmental Hero Award
- Environmental Defense Center's 2006 Environmental Hero Award
- California Shore and Beach Preservation Association Award
- California Legislature Assembly Resolution (Assembly member Pedro Nava)
- State of California former Lieutenant-Governor John Garamendi 2009 Coastal Hero Award

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In his own words, Peter offers the following thoughts on his impending retirement:

"My proudest accomplishment is putting together such an excellent staff. The quality and professionalism of the Coastal Commission's staff is second to none. This has been accomplished by screening for and recruiting excellent people, including activists, and empowering them to do their best. I have also counseled out those who were not team players and those with negative attitudes who were not cut out for this work.

Another key accomplishment is the empowerment of citizen activists around the state. The Commission has a track record of listening to members of the public and really hearing those voices that might not otherwise be heard. This has inspired activists to stay involved get engaged in other environmental struggles. The Coastal Commission was created by the

public, and it is sustained by public support. One of our roles is to promote public participation, it's written right into the law.

I am particularly proud of all the affordable housing we were able to achieve before our authority to do so got amended out of the Coastal Act, and of course, requiring the exclusionary Jonathon Club in Santa Monica and the Olympic Club in San Francisco to open up their memberships to Jews, African Americans, Latinos, Asians and women. That was a moral stand I took against the advice of the Attorney General's Office, but the Commission backed me up. We went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and won. The basis was Constitutional, but it was the Coastal Act that gave us the tools to take it up.

I am proud that I stood up to Governor Deukmejian when he ordered me to close the Commission offices in Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz in 1987. I refused, only because that would have crippled our ability to implement the Coastal Act in those critical areas. The Commission agreed, on the basis that the Governor didn't have authority over an independent commission. The offices remained open and even though he tried to starve us out, we hung in there.

And I am proud of every new public accessway along the coast. Whenever I go to those places, like East West Ranch (Cambria), Pebble Beach, the Monterey Bay multimodal bike path, it just makes me feel good knowing that people are still able to have the access to enjoy their coast. And I think of all the things we fought for that could have been privately held development but are now public parklands, like Tolowa Dunes State Park, Tomales Bay State Park, Garrapata State Park, Sea West Ranch, Malibu Bluffs, and Crystal Cove. None of those places would be what they are today if not for the Coastal Commission.

I think the California coast is one of the greatest repository of untold stories. People have to understand, it's like all relationships. You can't take our relationship with the coast for granted, because it took a lot of sweat, blood and tears to preserve it so we have what we have today. These things didn't just happen. The coast is what it is because a lot of people worked really hard and sacrificed to protect it. And if we want it to be there for our children, we have to keep fighting to protect it. In that way, the coast is never saved, its always being saved.

It's been an honor to lead this agency for 26 years. Effective leadership is recognizing that life is much about relationships. Nurturing those relationships enables us to live a better life and achieve higher outcomes. So good leadership requires you to develop good relationships with people. You need to leave your personal ego at the door when you come into a position like this. You have to be fair, listen to others, and remember that communication is a 2-way endeavor, with listening more important than talking. You can still be strong, but not in a command and control kind of way. You have to find ways to inspire people, not dominate them, and always be clear about your vision for the agency. My vision has always been that this agency will continue to carry out the public trust in a resolute, effective, strong way to protect the coast for future generations, and to maximize opportunities for the public to use and enjoy their coast.

I have given much to this program, but I have received even more in the way of personal growth and life lessons. I didn't have a lot of patience when I started out in this job, but I do now. I've refined my understanding of criticism so that I embrace constructive criticism, but don't take the slings and arrows personally. If you do that you miss the constructive elements and lose the important lessons. I've learned to set high standards, especially for myself, and

stick with them. I have calibrated a strong moral compass of integrity, professionalism, humanism, & humor. I've been reminded that the people we deal with are humans too, and deserve to be treated as such: with respect and compassion. Learning to bring empathy into the equation was a big lesson that I learned from getting my own permit to build our home in Pt Reyes. I know first-hand what it feels like to have your hopes and dreams in the hands of others. I have learned that all make mistakes, especially me, and that accountability is an important aspect to an agency's credibility. It's like life: we gain wisdom if we pay attention.

I'm looking forward to continued spiritual and intellectual growth in the time I have left, making the most of that time, spending time in my churches, the mountains, the deserts, the river valleys and the coast, and spending more time with my family, friends and especially my grandchildren. I am lucky to have this opportunity."

When asked if I had any idea when I started out what sort of a legacy I would create and leave for the people of this state, my reply was, "Absolutely not. I never thought about it. I just thought it was noble work, and I wanted to make a difference."