



TONI G. ATKINS

S P E A K E R E M E R I T U S

Toni G. Atkins has dedicated her career—from her time working in women’s health clinics, through two terms on the San Diego City Council and three terms in the state Assembly, including her two years as Assembly Speaker—fighting on behalf of the people most in need.

Under her leadership, the Assembly Democrats championed the state’s first Earned Income Tax Credit, which benefits nearly 1.5 million Californians and lifts 50,000 people out of poverty and 50,000 others out of deep poverty. She has also provided budget funding to help provide more affordable housing, one of the state’s biggest crises and the issue that is closest to her heart.

As Speaker, she helped stop the University of California from imposing a 27% tuition increase on students; was a leader in negotiating a \$7.5-billion water bond that provides clean, safe drinking water and makes improvements to the state’s water system; has helped ensure California’s financial stability through a Rainy Day Fund; aided in finding a solution to the chronic underfunding of the State Teachers Retirement System; and has led the passage of two on-time, balanced budgets.

Speaker Emeritus Atkins is a coalition builder who believes sound government policies can impact people’s lives in positive ways. During her tenure as Speaker, funding for higher education in California has reached its highest-ever level. In addition to being a leading voice for affordable housing, she is a powerful advocate for women, LGBT community and a champion for veterans, individuals, and families experiencing homelessness.

While Speaker, Toni Atkins passed legislation that helps small businesses, preserves dignity for transgender individuals, protects wildlife, assists victims of domestic violence, protects our environment, ensures coastal access, and strengthens family justice centers, among other accomplishments.

Speaker Emeritus Atkins was born in Virginia. She earned her bachelor’s degree in political science from Emory & Henry College and completed the senior executive program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Her life of public service began in San Diego in the mid-1980s as director of clinic services at Womancare Health Center. She served from 2000 to 2008 as a San Diego City Council member and acting Mayor in 2005 before her election to the Assembly in 2010.

Atkins lives in the South Park / Golden Hill community of San Diego with her spouse Jennifer LeSar and their dogs, Haley and Joey.