



Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners

DAVID S. CUNNINGHAM, III *President*

David S. Cunningham III, an African American redevelopment and land use attorney, was appointed to the Los Angeles Police Commission by Mayor James Hahn in August of 2001. He was elected President of the Commission in 2003, after being elected Vice President in 2002. The son of former City Councilman David S. Cunningham, Jr., he has been a resident of the City of Los Angeles for most of his life. Commissioner Cunningham's appointment to the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners is the culmination of two decades of distinguished service as a lawyer and public servant. Committed to bettering the Los Angeles community through his legal work and involvement with policy-making boards, Commissioner Cunningham's credentials include a background of professional accomplishment, community advocacy and academic achievement.

Commissioner Cunningham began his legal career as an attorney in the Honors Program with the United States Department of Justice. As counsel in the Voting Rights Section of the Civil Rights Division, he analyzed and litigated complex questions regarding application of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and advised U.S. governmental agencies, members of Congress, state elected officials, private attorneys and members of the public on changes in election law. He also represented the United States in all phases of voting rights litigation, and analyzed gaps in compliance with the Voting Rights Act. His study of devices used to dilute the strength of minority voting aided Congress in its decision to extend the Voting Rights Act another 25 years. In addition to working on voting rights violations, Commissioner Cunningham prosecuted criminal matters through the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia as part of his tenure under the Honors Program.

After leaving the Justice Department in 1983, Mr. Cunningham accepted a judicial clerkship with the Honorable Terry J. Hatter, Jr., who is now the presiding judge of the United States District Court for the Central District of California in Los Angeles. As a judicial clerk,

Commissioner Cunningham conducted research on a broad range of federal issues and wrote bench memoranda. He also supervised and edited the work of a staff of legal externs.

In 1984, Commissioner Cunningham joined the Beverly Hills office of the nationally recognized law firm of Finley, Kumble, Heine, Underberg, Manley & Casey, where he represented the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), in directors and officers liability actions. While at the firm, Commissioner Cunningham joined the staff of Loyola Law School, where he served as an adjunct professor from 1987 to 1991 teaching a financial institutions class and trial advocacy.

Commissioner Cunningham continued his civil litigation practice with the law firm of Donovan, Leisure, Newton & Irvine in Los Angeles in the late 1980s, before becoming "Of Counsel" to the law firm of Jackson & Lewis (now Jackson & Associates).

Over the past decade, Commissioner Cunningham has worked with municipal agencies to develop the economic base of the local community, especially in blighted and/or contaminated areas in Los Angeles. Most recently, his focus has been on helping to assess "Brownfields" parcels in South Central Los Angeles, to assist the Community Redevelopment Agency ("CRA") turn underutilized parcels into more commercially productive enterprises. The ultimate goal of this work is to create more jobs and business opportunities to an under-employed and under-served community.

As outside counsel for the CRA on various projects, Commissioner Cunningham has also litigated a number of matters involving land acquisition through voluntary land negotiations and through the use of eminent domain powers. His activities in this regard have ranged from precedent setting matters such as Worldwide Enterprises, Inc. vs. CRA, a condemnation matter that helped to clarify certain key provisions of the Eminent Domain Law, to the management of litigation involving parcels needed for the newly built Staples Arena, home of the LA Lakers. He has also been involved in the relocation of persons who were affected by the condemnation actions of the CRA.

Besides the CRA, Commissioner Cunningham has represented the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in land acquisition matters. He has also represented private companies in administrative proceedings before various municipal boards and agencies.

Commissioner Cunningham has an extensive history of serving the community. He has served on numerous boards and committees including the Los Angeles Urban League, the Los Angeles Business Council, the Watts Health Foundation Community Trust, and the Los Angeles Bar Association. Most recently, Commissioner Cunningham has served as a member of the Midnight Mission Advisory Committee for the Acquisition of New Facilities. Through his leadership, the Midnight Mission has sought to expand its facilities to include room for homeless families, in addition to chemically dependent individuals. In the process, he has helped to obtain on-going health care coverage for approximately 50 families. Commissioner Cunningham now sits on the Board of Directors of the Midnight Mission.

In 1977, Commissioner Cunningham graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Southern California where he was a columnist for the university paper and a member of the speech and debate team. He also served as a summer fellow in 1976 with the American Economic Association at Northwestern University, Chicago, Illinois working on macroeconomic models for the U.S. economy.

As a student at New York University School of Law, he was awarded a Root-Tilden-Kern Public Service Scholarship and was voted regional best advocate in the Frederick Douglas National Moot Court Competition. He received a fellowship to the U.S. Attorney's Office in New York and was a founding member of the law school's Public Interest Law Foundation, a student based organization founded to fund entry-level positions for attorneys seeking employment in public service oriented organizations.