



MELISSA WILK
ALAMEDA COUNTY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER/CLERK-RECORDER

February 2022 Newsletter

Message from Melissa

Dear Alameda County,

One of the best parts about being an elected leader in Alameda County is the privilege of living and serving one of the most diverse counties in the country. We are truly fortunate to have such a wealth of backgrounds, languages, and cultures in our communities.

In our January newsletter, I shared with you our expansive project to confront our country's legacy of redlining by redacting racially restrictive covenants from our archived documents. We also shared how we published our first brochure describing our Clerk-Recorder services in Chinese as we celebrated the Lunar New Year. And, of course, the community events and ceremonies all over Alameda County that my staff and I enjoy attending. As always, I am happy to share these examples of how we are always seeking to meet the needs of our wonderfully diverse communities.



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As we celebrate Black History Month in February, my message is dedicated to honoring the incredible history of African Americans and Black Americans in this country.

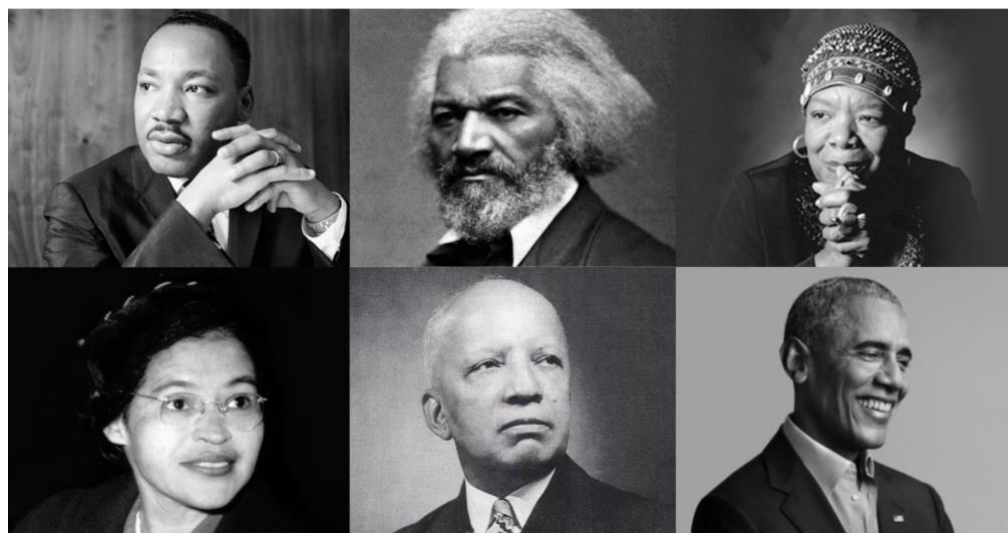
In this issue, I invite you to read about the work of our Arts Commission to help sustain the long tradition of quilting in African American societies. Please also enjoy the collage of people and families who chose to get married with us on Valentine's Day. And finally, find out which former Olympic gold medalist stopped by our Agency to give our staff some inspirational words on the importance of teamwork as we serve Alameda County.

I hope that this issue gives you a sense of how much we value serving and supporting the diversity of our communities. Read on and enjoy!

Best,

Melissa Wilk

Honoring Black History Month



Established by historian Carter G. Woodson, Black History Month celebrates the contributions and achievements of African Americans in United States history. What initially began as a week-long celebration has transformed into what is now known as Black History Month, with the help of former president Gerald Ford in 1976. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated February as Black History Month.

February is dedicated to celebrating black history as it coincides with the birthdates of two key figures who played central roles in shaping black history: abolitionist Frederick Douglass and former President Abraham Lincoln. Observed annually during the entire month of February, Black History Month allows us to share, learn, and celebrate the profound impact that black history has had on not just the United States, but throughout the world.

Valentine's Day and 2/22/22 Marriage Ceremonies at the Clerk-Recorder's Office



On February 14, 2022, the Clerk-Recorder's Office welcomed couples for in-person Valentine's Day marriage ceremonies for the first time since the pandemic. Although we have been performing in-person marriages since re-opening last summer, we were delighted to marry couples again on Valentine's Day.

The couples who got married with our help on Valentine's Day mirrored the rich diversity of Alameda County. Many of the newlyweds were from foreign countries (including Mexico, Cuba, and England), and currently reside all over Alameda County.

One couple from Berkeley, Laura and Dan, had been together for over 20 years. Laura's parents commuted from Redwood City, and her father, Robert, walked her down the aisle.

The marriage festivities continued later this month when Melissa Wilk officiated over a group ceremony of 60 couples in the plaza outside the County Administration Building on February 22. There was a high demand from the community for marriage ceremonies on that particular day because it fell on an auspicious numerical date of 2/22/22. Volunteer Deputy Marriage Commissioner Cseneca Parker enthusiastically emceed the event and introduced Melissa, who started the ceremony at exactly 2:22pm. (Look for more information on our Volunteer Deputy Marriage Commissioners in a future newsletter!)



The 60 couples, joined by dozens more families and friends, came from all over the Bay Area. One couple drove from Solano County, and wanted to quickly tie the knot before having to pick up their kids from school. The bride,

who wished to remain anonymous so they could tell loved ones later, said, "We have four kids and are planning a ceremony with family, but we wanted to get things done legally as soon as we could. So, here we are!"

Another couple, Colan and Erin, walked just a few blocks from their home in Oakland to join the group nuptials. "We saw the ceremony announcement on the [Clerk-Recorder] website, and it seemed like the easiest way to get married," said Colan with a wide smile. They have been together 11½ years, and were looking forward to getting married. "We hope to share and celebrate our news with loved ones in Indiana, Oregon, and Illinois when it's safer to do so."

"We have really missed celebrating with all the newlyweds and their families while we were closed for in-person services," said Melissa Wilk. "It's so much fun and so rewarding to have the community back to celebrate with us on days like Valentine's Day and 2/22/22. We were very happy to make this happen."

For more information about our marriage services and to book an appointment, please call us at (510) 272-6362 or visit our [website](#). All in-person ceremonies must be reserved with us in advance.

Meet our General Accounting Unit, Check out our new Annual Comprehensive Financial Report



The General Accounting Unit (pictured above) is responsible for general ledger accounting and financial reporting for Alameda County. This includes preparation of reports such as the annual financial statements, cost allocation plan, and budget submitted to the State Controller's Office. In addition, the Unit performs accounting tasks such as central review and approval of journal entries, preparation of budget journal entries for appropriations authorized by the Board of Supervisors, and processing of payees' claims for uncashed stale-dated warrants.

"The reports that the General Accounting Unit puts together serve a critical purpose in maintaining the County's fiscal health," said Assistant Controller Craig Boyer. "These reports are used by credit rating agencies to assess how likely the County can meet its financial obligations." Due partly to the hard work of the General Accounting Unit, the County has achieved a AAA credit rating from all three credit rating agencies, the highest credit rating possible.

One of the most important reports that General Accounting publishes is the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). This report contains a set of financial statements that presents data used to assess Alameda County's financial health.

Our recently published fiscal year 2020-2021 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report is now available on our [website](#). Some highlights from our report:

- The assets and deferred outflows of resources of the County exceeded its liabilities and deferred inflows of resources at the close of the fiscal year by \$2.6 billion (net position).
- The government's total net position increased for fiscal year 2020-2021 by \$457.6 million, an increase of 21% over the prior fiscal year. Total revenue increased \$471.2 million, and total expenses increased \$231.7 million over the prior fiscal year.

The excellent work of the General Accounting Unit has been continually recognized by national organizations. For example, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) awarded Alameda County the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its ACFR for the year ended June 30, 2020 (the latest eligible fiscal year). The County has received this prestigious award for 38 consecutive years. This award is given to state and local governments who go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare annual comprehensive financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure.



Celebrating Art and Black History Month in Alameda County



Pictured from left to right: Rachel Osajima, Arts Commission Director; Melissa Wilk, Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder; Dolores Presley, African American Quilt Guild of Oakland Exhibition Co-Chairperson; Keith Carson, President of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors; Marie Taylor, African American Quilt Guild of Oakland President; Ora Clay, African American Quilt Guild of Oakland Exhibition Co-Chairperson.

Every year, the Alameda County Arts Commission presents exhibitions at the County Administration Building in Oakland to provide the public with positive and uplifting experiences. The current exhibition features 20 quilts created by members of the African American Quilt Guild of Oakland in celebration of their 20th year as an Oakland-based community organization.

The African American Quilt Guild of Oakland's mission is to preserve and continue the tradition of quilting while promoting fellowship among the diverse quilters in Alameda County. The Quilt Guild provides workshops to community members of all ages, presents exhibitions and special events, and donates quilts to those in need.

On January 31, Melissa Wilk and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors recognized the African American Quilt Guild of Oakland as part of its celebration of Black History Month. Melissa Wilk and Board of Supervisors President Keith Carson presented Quilt Guild President Marie Taylor and Board Members Ora Clay and Dolores Presley with a commendation to acknowledge the Quilt Guild's important contributions.

"We want to congratulate the African American Quilt Guild of Oakland on their 20th year anniversary and commend them for their commitment to preserving the tradition of quilting in the community," said Melissa. "We are especially honored to be able to celebrate their efforts during a month that recognizes the history and achievements of the African-American community."

This exhibition is coordinated by the Alameda County Arts Commission which is a division of the Alameda County Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency. Please view the exhibition at the Alameda County Arts Commission [website](#). Due to Covid restrictions, in-person viewing is limited. Please contact the Arts Commission for more information. You can also find more information about the African American Quilt Guild [here](#).

Leadership & Teamwork with Olympic Gold Medalist Ruthie Bolton



The Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency is dedicated to providing our staff with resources to develop and enhance their professional, personal and leadership skills. Our Agency was excited to announce the first keynote speaker, Ruthie Bolton, of our new Agency Speaker Series for 2022. On February 7, Melissa invited Ruthie Bolton – an accomplished professional athlete, advocate, published author and entrepreneur – to deliver a virtual leadership and teamwork presentation to all of our staff.

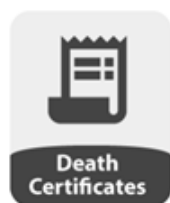
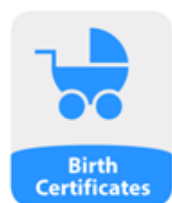
For the presentation, Ms. Bolton recounted her journey as a 2-time Olympic gold medalist, coach, and army first lieutenant to emphasize the importance of maintaining a positive mindset, accountability, and trust within your team. Additionally, Ms. Bolton described the adversity she faced throughout her journey and explained how her work in the community reflects her personal experiences. Much of Ms. Bolton's post-athletic career has included providing a safe space for youth, LGBTQ+, women, and families that also face adversity.

In addition to her motivating talk, Ms. Bolton graciously provided staff with autographed copies of her inspirational book, *The Ride of a Lifetime: The Making of Mighty Ruthie*, when she visited our office. Considering all of her amazing accomplishments, Ms. Bolton is a highly sought-after speaker, so our Agency was extremely privileged and honored to meet with her during this tie.

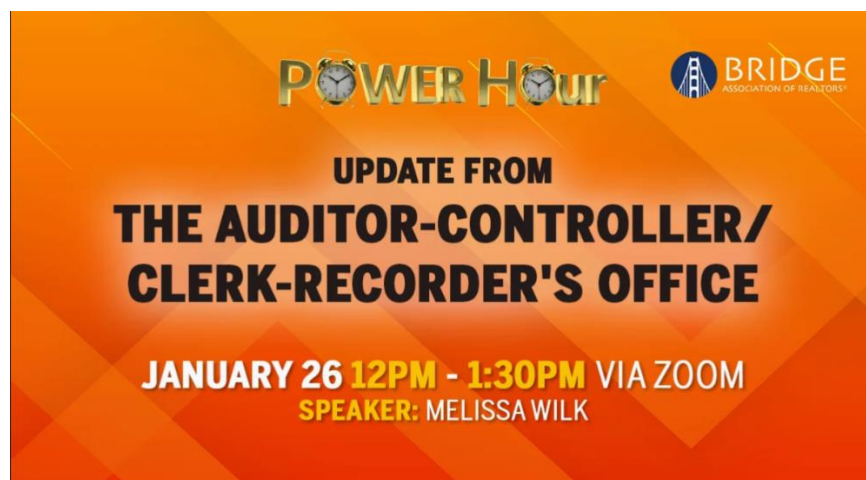
She left our Agency with this parting wisdom, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

SAVE TIME AND ORDER ONLINE

Need your birth, marriage, or death certificate? Save yourself time and order online!
 Select our pick-up option and we can typically turn around your order within a few days.
 Click below to get started.



Presenting our Resources to the Community

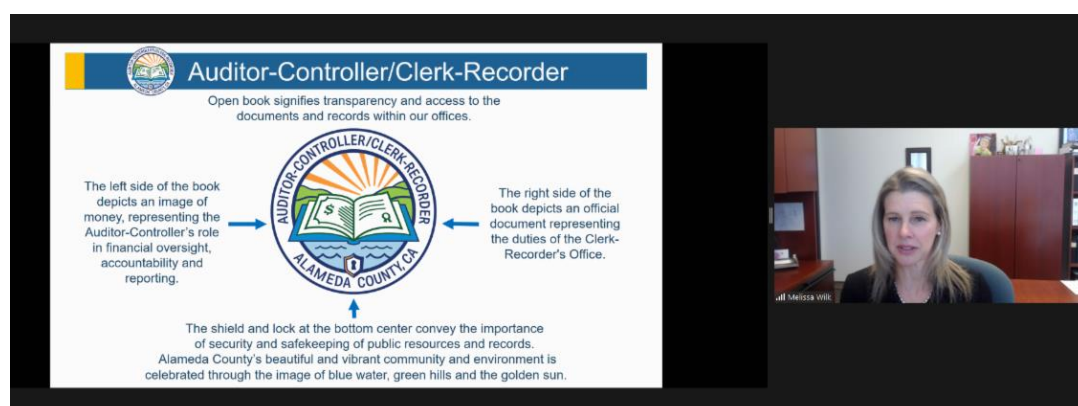


There have been many changes at the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency as a result of the pandemic, which is why we have created virtual presentations to inform various communities throughout the County about the Agency's operational innovations. Melissa and her executive staff members presented to the Bridge Association of Realtors on January 26 and the Fairview Municipal Advisory Council on February 1 with virtual presentations to provide them with an overview of the Agency's services and updates.

The Bridge Association of Realtors is one of the largest real estate trade associations in the East Bay. Their members serve Alameda community members in Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, and Piedmont. Auditor-Controller and Clerk-Recorder staff were invited to present during the Association's monthly Power Hour meeting. The presentation outlined the roles of the County's principal agencies in the property tax system and featured key information about our online e-services, how we protected homeowners, and key contacts for follow-up questions to specific issues.

The Fairview Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) advises the Alameda County Board of Supervisors on Fairview land use and general-purpose matters. Fairview MAC's presentation included key information about the Auditor-Controller's role in controlling, auditing, and reporting the County's \$3.6 billion budget; activities of the Arts Commission; major Agency accomplishments; and our Small, Local Emerging Business (SLEB) program that helps small businesses within Alameda County.

Out in the Community: Rotary Club of Fremont Presentation



On February 2, Melissa Wilk presented to the Rotary Club of Fremont with a virtual presentation describing the updates that our Agency has undergone as a result of the pandemic.

The Rotary Club of Fremont's mission is to build meaningful relationships with community members that are based on collective altruism. The Club believes in service above self and affects change through local and international projects. The Rotary Club of Fremont has been proudly serving the community since 1963.

In addition to providing information about our updated services, the presentation outlined the different programs that our Agency offers and the various ways in which they provide support to the public. Melissa highlighted our award-winning virtual marriage program designed to allow all California couples to get married virtually, the County's Temporary Assignment Program (TAP) that provides individuals with immediate staffing support, and the Alameda County Arts Commission ARTSFUND grant program that provides Alameda County nonprofit arts organizations with financial support.

QUESTIONS FOR OUR AGENCY?

Are there upcoming community events that you would like us to attend? Do you have a specific question you would like to ask? Is your community or organization interested in a presentation about the services provided by the Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency?

Email Melissa Wilk at ACCR.info@acgov.org or follow her on [Twitter](#) to let her know what questions we can answer and how we can support your efforts.



STAY IN TOUCH

To get breaking updates on Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency services, announcements, and hours of operation, follow Melissa on Twitter [@MelissaWilkACCR](#).

If this email was forwarded to you, subscribe to our newsletter by emailing us at ACCR.info@acgov.org.



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