



County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors



SUPERVISOR FRANK L. SHAW

Term: 1928 - 1933
District: Second
Date of Birth: Feb. 1, 1877
Death: Jan. 24, 1958

Frank L. Shaw served as county supervisor for two terms. He was elected in 1928, and resigned from office on June 26, 1933, after being elected mayor of Los Angeles. Gordon I. McDonough was appointed by the governor as Shaw's replacement. After winning re-election as mayor in 1937, his administration was riddled with scandal. The climax came on Jan. 4, 1938, when an investigator for a reform group was nearly killed by a bomb planted by Capt. Earl Kynette of the Los Angeles Police Department. Kynette's conviction, along with that of two city commissioners for vice and labor racketeering, led to a recall election. On Sept. 16, 1938, Shaw became the first Los Angeles mayor to be recalled.

Shaw was born Feb. 1, 1877, near Warwick, Ontario. In 1883, at age 6, the family moved to the United States, settling in Denver, Colo. in the late 1880s. While working on a ranch, Shaw was afflicted with polio, which left him with a noticeable limp the rest of his life.

In 1895, after studying business in public and private schools, Shaw began his career as a clerk in a country store, and over the next 30 years, he worked in every facet of the wholesale and retail grocery trade.

In 1909 Shaw and his new wife moved to Los Angeles to take a new job. Shaw was a staunch Republican, and he became involved in civic affairs. In 1925 he was elected to the City Council, and he was re-elected again two years later. He resigned from the City Council on Nov. 28, 1928 after being elected county supervisor.

At the beginning of Shaw's term, Los Angeles was suffering from a 40 percent unemployment rate. Shaw traveled to Washington, D.C., and obtained \$3 million of an eventual \$100 million in federal funds for the Works Progress Administration and other New Deal projects. He was noted for his commitment to public ownership, and during his administration, he made the Department of Water and Power the sole distributor of electricity within the city limits.

After Shaw was recalled as mayor, his brother and personal secretary, Joseph Shaw, was convicted of civil service fraud. Liberty magazine claimed that the Shaw administration had been "in league with the underworld." But the former mayor was exonerated of all wrongdoing when the State Supreme Court overturned his brother's conviction. Liberty magazine, faced with a libel suit, settled out of court for \$50,000 and a public apology.

Shaw ran again for mayor in 1941 but was defeated in the primary. He sought to fill a vacancy on the Board of Supervisors in 1944, to no avail. On his return to private life, Shaw became the

president of the NO Flame Chemical Corporation, and later had a successful career in real estate.

Shaw's credits included membership in the Chamber of Commerce, the United Commercial Travelers of America, the Los Angeles Athletic and Jonathon Clubs, Presbyterian Church, Masonic Temple (320), Shriners Club and Elks/Moose/Eagle/Maccabee Lodges.

On Jan. 24, 1958, Shaw died of cancer. He was 80.

Source: Biographical Dictionary of American Mayors, 1820-1980; Los Angeles County Records.