

Thank you everyone for being here to celebrate Steven's retirement. Thank you for that kind introduction, Kayla. I am happy to speak as a representative of the City of San Luis Obispo, former Mayor and environmental activist. More important, I speak as Steven's wife and life partner of 55 years.

The City of San Luis Obispo, is proud of City Farm SLO's stewardship of the Calle Joaquin Agricultural Open Space. This nonprofit not only educates youth, produces wonderful organic food and combats climate change by sequestering carbon, but it is also the real life embodiment of our City's 1994 vision.

In 1994 the City Council voted to save the County's finest productive soil, now the soil of City Farm SLO. The General Plan Update provided that upon annexation, half of each of the three properties between 101 LOVR and Madonna Road would stay under cultivation, as a "signature working agricultural landscape at the southern gateway to San Luis Obispo" The three owners, Madonna, McBride and Dalidio promised to devote half of their land to ag open space in return for the right to develop the other half. Madonna and McBride gave the City the land we are on right now, City Farm SLO, keeping their promise. However, Dalidio did not.

Instead, Mr. Dalidio proposed to build a Mega Mall right next door to what would become City Farm SLO. For decades, on or off SLO City Council, I fought to preserve half of this incredibly rich and productive land in agricultural open space as promised. Here is a brief account of the twists and turns:

In 1998, Dalidio applied to build a shopping center on all of his land. The Council on which I served denied the project for not devoting half of his land to ag. In 2001 Dalidio applied to the County for a bigger mall, but the County sent it back to the City. In 2004, Dalidio proposed an even bigger mall, and the City Council--which I was not on then--approved the project. It allowed taxpayers dollars from the Mall to pay for the Prado Road overpass, not Dalidio. The voters overturned that decision by referendum, which I organized. In 2006 Dalidio mounted a Countywide initiative for Mall development and won. Then City residents sued, which I organized. The Court overturned Dalidio's initiative. Then, the CA Supreme Court overturned that decision. But then, the economy collapsed during the Great Recession of 2008, so the Mall was dead in its tracks. In 2010, Dalidio sold the land, now San Luis Ranch, to a developer who will preserve the ag land. So instead of a Mega Mall, City Farm SLO will have acres and acres of organic agriculture next door.

In the years I fought to save ag land, Steven stood by my side. But, never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that one day he would be the one to actually implement the vision of preserving this "signature working agricultural landscape," on this very soil by guiding the evolution of City Farm SLO. I stand in awe of all that he has done to envision, nurture and lead this incredibly positive enterprise. As an enthusiastic volunteer over the

past decade, whether dealing with pesky irrigation issues, teaching disabled students or planning the future, Steven is devoted to City Farm SLO. I would like to thank the organizers of this event for giving Steven the recognition he so richly deserves. I so happy he and I found each other when we were in our twenties and so proud of him, every single day. Let's hear it for Steven!