



San Francisco Bay Area Consortium

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Berkeley to Honor Long-Time Activist

On Tuesday, November 10th at 7pm, the City of Berkeley will proclaim “Evangeline Canonizado Buell Day” to honor Buell’s community activism in the arts, music, and social change at the local and international levels. Since the 1950s “Vangie” Buell has actively promoted cultural understanding and empowerment through experiencing diverse food, music, and art. Her efforts have helped shape Bay Area culture as it is today.

Oct. 20, 2009. BERKELEY, CA. Vangie Buell is one of those rare people whose life has been a series of fulfilling careers. Throughout her careers as folk musician, community educator, public event producer, community leader, and author, she has engaged thousands of people in the appreciation and creation of ethnic music, art, and events. This has led to the arousal of a sense of individual connection with their cultural legacy and encouraged the embracing of that legacy in their daily lives.

Buell believes that one’s self-esteem is greatly influenced by ethnic pride in history and culture, and is understood as it is handed down through stories of past generations to the next generation. At the Consumers Co-Operative of Berkeley in the 1960s and 1970s, she led the movement to bring new food experiences and cultural exchanges that helped gather ethnic communities to break down the barrier of communication and the racial divide.

Buell’s activism in the civil rights, anti-war, peace, and gay rights movements opened doors for understanding and healing within the community, and her commitment to social justice, human dignity, multicultural understanding, and equality was recognized by the YMCA of the East Bay through conferring its Martin Luther King Jr. *2009 Award for Human Dignity and Brotherhood*.

Her fundraising efforts culminated in the highly successful *Co-Op Hootenanny* which benefited the University Students Cooperative Association’s Building Fund and other worldwide co-op partners.

Her commitment to cross-cultural understanding reached global proportions in her work as the first Public Events Coordinator for the International House at the University of California at Berkeley, where she fostered and promoted cultural exchanges between international and American students, staff, residents, scholars, diplomats, heads of state, public figures, entertainment industry luminaries, spiritual leaders and practitioners, and the general community through more than 2,000 events each year. In particular, Buell enjoyed assisting young students in the organizing of Pilipino American Alliance cultural events.

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In her accomplished 25-year career as a folk singer and guitarist on concert stage, radio and television, she focused on Songs of Peace and promoted the understanding of several ethnic traditions. Today she is a member of the Oakland Bay Area Community Chorus, which specializes in Afro-American Spirituals, Gospel and Jazz, directed by Bill Bell.

Buell's contributions to the creative growth of the local community were as Chair of the Berkeley Art Center and chair of the Berkeley Arts Commission, and Oakland's Cole School Performing and Arts magnet. The Filipino community has been greatly enriched after her founding of the East Bay Chapter of the Filipino American National Historical Society, with her leadership as National Vice President and Trustee, as chair of the Asian Pacific Advisory Council of the Oakland Museum of California, through her co-chairmanship for the Asian Art Museum's first event to include the Filipino American community and arts in its collection, and through her strong support for the State of California's permanent recognition of October as Filipino American National History Month.

Her courage in highlighting the need for the prevention of domestic violence in Filipino families has led to much healing in the community, and was recognized by the Filipina Women's Network's *Woman Warrior Award*, and acknowledgment as one of the *100 Most Influential Filipina Women in the United States*.

The body of her community work so far has been acknowledged with awards from the University of California at Berkeley, the Berkeley Commission on the Status of Women, multiple awards from the Filipina Women's Network and the Filipino American National Historical Society, the Filipinos for Affirmative Action, and received Congressional Recognition from Barbara Lee and Pete Stark.

Her commitment to preserving community stories resulted in the first anthology of documented stories of Filipino Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area *Seven Card Stud and Seven Manangs Wild*, the first East Bay 100-year photojournal of *Filipinos in the East Bay*, and her memoirs *Twenty-Five Chickens and a Pig for a Bride: Growing Up in a Filipino Immigrant Family*, the last for which she received the *2007 Filipino Global Literary Award* from the Library of Congress, and she was International House's *2004 Distinguished Annual Lecture Lodestar Presenter*.

She has lived in Berkeley with her husband Bill Buell and her three daughters, and her lifework has enriched the Berkeley and Bay Area community for more than 77 years.

The proclamation ceremony will be held at 7pm on Tuesday, November 10th, at City Hall, located at 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, between Center Street and Allston Way in Berkeley.

Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) promotes understanding, education, enlightenment, appreciation, and enrichment through the gathering, identification, preservation, and dissemination of the history and culture of Filipino Americans in the United States. FANHS has five chapters in the Bay Area, and 23 more chapters nationwide.

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