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NEWS RELEASE

JUDGE EMMETT APPOINTS GENE LOCKE TO REPLACE EL FRANCO LEE AS COMMISSIONER

*Local Attorney with Long History of Public Service
Sworn In to Complete Remaining 11 Months of Current Term*

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett announced this morning that he had appointed and sworn in former Houston city attorney and longtime governmental counsel Gene Locke to finish the late El Franco Lee's term as Precinct 1 Harris County commissioner.

Locke, 68, is a partner at the Andrews Kurth law firm and a former Houston mayoral candidate. He will serve as commissioner for Precinct 1 through Dec. 31. He replaces Lee, who died unexpectedly Jan. 3 after more than 30 years in office.

Locke, a longtime friend and counsel to Lee, has said he does not intend to run for election after the current term expires.

Emmett said he two main criteria in selecting a new commissioner.

"My first goal has been to find a person who knew Commissioner Lee and his family, so that El Franco's priorities would be continued," Emmett said. "Secondly, I hoped to find someone who understands the workings of Harris County government. Gene Locke meets both criteria very well."

Locke, 68, has a long history of activism and public service, including stints as city attorney from 1995-1998, general counsel to the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority and special counsel to the Metropolitan Transit Authority. He also represented Commissioners Court during the court's most recent redistricting efforts.

"This precinct belongs to El Franco Lee," Locke said after his swearing in. "And anything I do for the next 11 months belongs to his legacy."

Emmett announced his decision and gave the oath of office to Locke before local media at a news conference this morning at the Harris County Administration Building in downtown Houston.