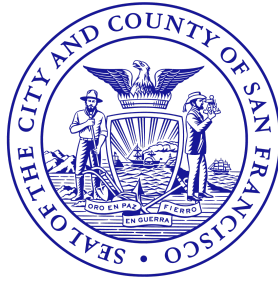


City and County
of San Francisco



Board of Supervisors
Member, District 6

MATT DORSEY

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STATEMENT

Supervisor Matt Dorsey's statement on the passing of former District Attorney Arlo Smith

San Francisco's long-serving prosecutor pioneered groundbreaking programs on domestic violence, victims' services, and hate crimes. He was 98.

SAN FRANCISCO (Oct. 9, 2025) — Supervisor Matt Dorsey this evening issued the following statement on news late today of the passing of Arlo Smith, who served as San Francisco's District Attorney from 1980 to 1996. Smith, who was the Democratic Party's nominee for state attorney general in 1990, was memorialized earlier this evening in a social media post from [Mayor Daniel Lurie](#). The Smith family also released [a short biography](#).

I'm saddened to learn of the passing of Arlo Smith, San Francisco's district attorney from 1980 to 1996. Arlo was among my first bosses, and he was an influential mentor to me for his commitment to doing justice, protecting public safety, and uplifting the marginalized.

Decades ahead of other enlightened prosecutors, Arlo hired and promoted many talented women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQ+ community — myself included — to law enforcement and leadership roles, at a time when there weren't many of us there. He trusted me to manage his successful 1991 re-election bid, a year after his narrow loss for California attorney general, for which I served as deputy press secretary.

As his speechwriter, I worked hard to learn his voice — but I benefited most from learning his values. I'm especially grateful to Arlo for affording me the opportunity at a young age to work with him when he created the District Attorney's Hate Crimes Task Force in 1991 — to develop protocols for prosecuting crimes that target not just victims, but whole communities.

It was there I first came to learn about the inspiring and magnificent diversity of San Francisco at its best — and how this city's eclectic communities can rally around one another on unifying issues like protecting the safety of our most vulnerable and standing up to discrimination.

My condolences to his loving surviving children: Arlo, Averell (Laura Talmus), and Alexa; his grandchildren, Mina Sohaa and Abram Hale, and his great-grandchildren, Tadhg Hale and Nora Lili.

Rest in peace, Arlo. Thank you for your service to our city, and for the inspiration your life and leadership were to me.

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Contact: BRYAN DAHL

Bryan.Dahl@sfgov.org

+1 (415) 554-7969 w