

End of an era for Sens. Boxer, Feinstein

By Sarah D. Wire, Tribune Washington Bureau

In 1992, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer pitched themselves to California voters as the dynamic duo, as “Thelma and Louise,” as “Cagney and Lacey.”

They were trying to persuade voters to do something no state had ever done: Elect two women to represent them in the U.S. Senate.

Feinstein, a former mayor of San Francisco, was a consensus builder willing to buck her own party at times to reach a compromise. Boxer, who served 10 years in the House before coming to the Senate, was a bit of a flamethrower, more rigidly ideological and staunchly devoted to the environment and women’s health care.

The 76-year-old Boxer is retiring in January, leaving behind a 24-year working relationship with Feinstein that was by all appearances in sync until its last days, when an argument over water policy played out in public.

Starting Jan. 3, Feinstein will have a new partner in Democrat Kamala Harris, who has a blend of Boxer’s progressive ideology and Feinstein’s pragmatism.

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