

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, much of what Austin has become during most of the last half-century is due in many ways to the vision and quiet leadership of Vic Mathias. From his office on the banks of Town Lake and Auditorium Shores during his unprecedented 27-year tenure as Chief Executive Officer of the Austin Chamber of Commerce, he provided the vision and leadership to implement much of what distinguishes Austin today; and

WHEREAS, soon after Vic took over the reins of the Chamber of Commerce in the late 1950s, he realized three essential truths about Austin: 1) the quality of life and its environment were essential to the city's identity and success, 2) the city's young people were leaving the city because of the paucity of jobs, and 3) attraction of "clean industry" jobs, with an emphasis on the area's educational assets, was essential to maximize the first two; and

WHEREAS, during almost three decades, he developed programs and guided staff and volunteers to expand and establish elements to accomplish these goals. Throughout these accomplishments, Vic Mathias kept a low profile in deference to the dedicated Austin volunteers he brought together. Following his Chamber tenure, he reversed roles and spent the next three decades as a volunteer leader for Austin nonprofits. He died in January 2013 at the age of 86; and

WHEREAS, as Chief Executive Officer of the Chamber, Vic Mathias was a pioneer in developing Austin's reputation for community events, festivals and live music with Lady Bird Lake as the City's crown jewel centerpiece.

- He originated the Austin Aqua Festival which ran for 35 years along the shores and on Town Lake, establishing a national recognition for Austin as an oasis in Texas. It highlighted Austin's emerging music scene, diverse culture and natural resources.
- He was a leader on the original Town Lake Beautification Committee that designed and implemented a plan for citizen use of the banks of Town Lake. Mrs. Lady Bird Johnson referred to Vic as her "tree man" for his vision to plant trees along the banks.
- He individually named all the banks of Lady Bird Lake with "beaches" on the north banks (Festival Beach) and "shores" on the south (Auditorium Shores).
- He operated the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau for more than 20 years, while heading up the Chamber, until the City of Austin assumed that function; and

WHEREAS, Vic Mathias believed that to keep Austin's young people from leaving the area to find employment, the City could thrive economically by highlighting our environmentally-sound quality of life and highly-educated workforce to attract "clean industry."

- He founded the Austin Economic Development Council (forerunner of Opportunity Austin) and beginning in the early 1960s the Austin Chamber marketed Austin tirelessly nationwide to attract world-class "clean industry" employers (such as IBM, TI, etc.) that ultimately led to the emergence of the high tech

sector of Austin's economy. This was accomplished by working with the City of Austin, The University of Texas, business leaders and civic volunteers. This sustained Chamber of Commerce effort continued under Vic's leadership until his retirement in 1983 and it has expanded today.

- As a volunteer naturalist and entrepreneur, he expanded the recognition and appreciation for the area's natural treasures, reinforcing the area's economic development and quality of life reputation. He helped form and operate the Highland Lakes Tourist Association, was one of the organizers of the Discover Texas Association and served three years as Vice President of the Beautify Texas Council. Knowing the value of Austin's natural setting on the Colorado River and the edge of the Hill Country, Vic and his wife Helen founded three tour companies: 1) Town Lake Tours, which featured the ecosystems of the lake area, flora, bluffs, springs and ancient geological history of the lake; 2) Austin Tours which was the first and only city tour at the time; and 3) The Texas Nature Tour Company which took weekend tours to natural areas such as Travis County's Hamilton Pool and West Cave Preserve long before they were accessible to the general public; and

WHEREAS, Vic Mathias epitomizes the volunteer community working through non-profits on behalf of Austin. He served 27 years as a non-profit executive, leading volunteers. He then served an additional 30 years as a volunteer, reversing his role to practice what he taught.

- Under his guidance, Leadership Austin – one of the earliest leadership programs in America – was founded and it has helped encourage many of Austin’s current leaders. As Chamber CEO, he rescued the Austin-Travis County Rodeo when it was on the brink of bankruptcy and the Chamber operated the rodeo for almost 20 years, when it became a free-standing non-profit organization. Additionally he was a founding member of the Capitol Area Security Council and the Austin Foreign Trade Council, to name a few.
- After retiring from the Chamber of Commerce, there was never a time that Vic was not volunteering, serving on dozens of boards and commissions – ranging from the Mental Health Association to the Austin Symphony to Rotary International to Austin Artist Harvest to the Austin Bicentennial Commission. He hosted and raised the initial funds for “Crime Stoppers.” And in the last year of his life, at the age of 86, the former WWII foot soldier was the fundraiser for the inaugural Honor Flight Austin that transported aging World War Two veterans to Washington DC to visit the moving WWII memorial; and

WHEREAS, it seems altogether fitting, one year after Vic Mathias died, that the East Lawn portion of Auditorium Shores be renamed Vic Mathias Shores as a tribute to the Austinite who may have done more than anyone else to utilize and enhance this exquisite asset for the benefit of all Austinites; and

WHEREAS, the grounds have changed dramatically since Vic began 27 years in his office there. (In fact, the original auditorium has changed to

the Long Performance Center.) And Austin has changed dramatically – in many ways, as a result of Vic’s vision and action; and

WHEREAS, an appropriate way to recognize Vic Mathias’ role in shaping Austin would be to re-name the East Lawn portion of Auditorium Shores, Vic Mathias Shores in his honor; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

Under City Code Chapter 14-1, Article 4 (*Approval of a Name for a Public Facility or Property*), Council establishes that the procedure for renaming the East Lawn portion of Auditorium Shores is a review and approval by the City Council, based on a review of the accomplishments of Vic Mathias.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The East Lawn portion of Auditorium Shores, as shown on the attached **Exhibit A**, is named “Vic Mathias Shores.”

ADOPTED: _____, 2014 **ATTEST:** _____
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk