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Initial: AT



Application for Naming a Public Facility or Property

Please follow the instructions below when submitting an application for naming a facility or property.

1. Complete the application by providing detailed information about the proposed facility or park name. Please include supplemental information such as articles, letters of support and signature list with the application.
2. City of Austin Parks & Recreation Department must receive the application within the 90 day public comment period in order for the application to be considered.
3. Send all submittals to: Austin Parks and Recreation Department, Attn: April Thedford, 919 W. 28 1/2 Street, Austin, TX 78705
4. Questions may be directed to April Thedford via email: april.thedford@austintexas.gov or by phone: (512) 974-9408

Current Name of Facility or Property: AUDITORIUM SHORES DECK

Proposed Name for the Facility or Property: ROBERTA CRENSHAW SHORES

If proposing the name of an individual, include a biographical description of nominee:

SEE ATTACHED BIOGRAPHY (2 PAGES)

Describe the individual's involvement in the Austin community:

SEE ATTACHED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (3 PAGES)

Describe the individual's connection to the facility or property, if any:

SEE ATTACHED CONNECTION TO THE FACILITY
AND PROPERTY (3 PAGES)

If proposing a name other than individual, summarize the reason for the name:

Name of requester: SHUDDO FATH

BIOGRAPHY – Roberta Crenshaw

**Roberta Purvis was born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1914
Attended National Park Seminary in Washington, D.C.
Came to Austin in 1932 to attend UT and received a BA
degree in 1936; graduated with Accolade; chosen
Outstanding Senior; in Who's Who for College Students;
president of her sorority**

**Married Malcolm Reed, a prominent cotton merchant,
oil man, and philanthropist, in 1936**

**They had two daughters, Roberta Purvis Reed and
Lucy Burford Reed**

Malcolm Reed died in 1945 (a 9-year marriage)

**Married attorney Fagan Dickson on 12-31-47 and
divorced him in 1975 (a 27-year marriage)**

**Married attorney Charles Crenshaw (father of golfer
Ben Crenshaw) in October 1975 and he died in 1999
(a 23-year marriage)**

**Lived in Reed Hall, a Tudor Revival mansion at 3200 Bowman
Road, from 1937 to 1980 and lived in a new home overlooking
Lake Austin from 1980 until her death in 2005.**

**In 1952, she was appointed by Council Member Emma Long
to the Parks Board and served until 1970, including as chair
1964-1969.**

**Sometime in the 1960s, she was nominated to be a member
of the National Recreation and Park Board (founded by
President Theodore Roosevelt during his 1901-1909 terms).
The Board consisted of prominent professionals and lay
people across America from whom she learned a lot.**

In April 1967, she hosted a garden party at Reed Hall honoring 64 trustees meeting in Austin. Guests included M/M Laurance Rockefeller (the president), Lady Bird Johnson, Senator & Mrs. Ralph Yarborough, Mayor & Mrs. Lester Palmer, CMs Emma Long & Dick Nichols. The event received extensive media coverage. Roberta was one of three Texans on the Board.

In 1970, she suffered an aneurysm/stroke that forced a reduction in activism. Note: The Austin History Center has a 29-page transcription of a 10-02-86 oral interview Roberta did with Anthony Orum; this interview sometimes reveals a failure to remember names and dates.

In 2000, she fell and broke both hips; she was confined to a wheelchair until her death in 2005.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT– Roberta Crenshaw

Part One – DONATIONS:

To City of Austin: the six-acre Reed Park along Taylor's Slough in west Austin

To City of Austin: 30 acres to create the Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Park

To the non-profit Paramount Theatre: her 51% ownership interest and then persuaded the remaining Reed heirs to sign a 99-year lease, thus enabling the non-profit corporation to receive \$1.85M in grants from the federal Economic Development Administration for restoration. She then served on the board for many years.

**Part Two – CULTURAL & PHILANTHROPIC INVOLVEMENT
(listed alphabetically)**

Austin Ballet Society (now Ballet Austin) – co-founder 1953

Austin Heritage Society – leader

Austin History Center Association – founding member

Austin Symphony Orchestra Society – founding member

Caritas – active contributor

Laguna Gloria Art Museum – helped to establish and served on board

Meals on Wheels & More – Board of Trustees and founding member for Endowment Fund

Texas Chapter of American Institute of Architects (AIA) – Honorary Architect. Note: this was the result of Roberta's turning to architects about the effects of impervious cover after unsuccessfully lobbying developers and the city's

Public Works director about impervious cover and overdevelopment in northwest Austin. He called Shoal Creek a drainage ditch, and then the disastrous 1981 Shoal Creek flood claimed 13 lives along with millions in property damage. The architects listened and asked Roberta to speak at their meetings.

Umlauf Sculpture Garden (opened in 1991)

Persuaded Charles and Angie Umlauf to donate sculptures.

Secured the 1989 Texas Legislature's approval of a land swap between city-owned land in northwest Austin and state-owned land that now contains the Umlauf Sculpture Garden.

Raised \$1M endowment fund to ensure its independence from city budget processes.

UT Chancellor's Council – member

UT Fine Arts Association – life member

UT School of Architecture – advisory board; Professor

Sinclair Black held the Roberta Crenshaw Centennial

Professorship in Urban Design & Environmental Planning

Women's Symphony League

Part Three – AWARD AND HONORS (listed alphabetically)

Austin Parks & Recreation Dept.: Roberta Crenshaw

Walkway dedication – April 18, 2005

Austin Parks & Recreation Dept.: Distinguished Service award

Ballet Austin Guild: Honorary Women on Their Toes award

Board of Architects: Members' Roll

City of Austin: Distinguished Service Award – 1987

City Council, PARD, and Environmental Council: Award of

Appreciation for Contribution and Dedicated Service to Conservation of the Environment and the Development of the City of Austin Parks Program – 2004 (?)

Dictionary of International Biography

Sue & Frank McBee Visionary Award: for longstanding commitment to historical preservation in the Greater Austin area

Meals on Wheels & More: Austin Community Keepsake Award for volunteerism to improve quality of life for Central Texas residents – 1997

National Register of Who's Who

Nature Conservancy: Conservation Leadership Award

Nature Conservancy: Oak Leak Award – 1989

Park Patrol Award, made out of a piece of Treaty Oak – 2005

Rotary Club: Rotary Community Service Award – 1991

Jane D. Sibley Award for Sustained Arts Leadership in Austin – 1989

Lola Wright Foundation: Raymond Todd Civic Award - 1990

Quote from John Bernardoni of Paramount Theatre:....one particular moment stands out....Beautifully dressed, she stopped by the theatre to see how a particularly difficult painting job was progressing wherein the walls are “umbered” with a natural sponge. Not liking what she saw, she scrambled up the scaffolding in the inner lobby, high heels and all, and proceeded to show the painter how it was done. That was Bobbie Crenshaw in spades....She became a close friend, teacher, mentor, guide....

CONNECTION TO THE FACILITY AND PROPERTY

“Lady Bird Johnson often gets the credit for Town Lake’s beauty and its popular hike-and-bike trail, but when she was praised for that, Mrs. Johnson used to say that all she did was get aboard a moving train. Roberta Crenshaw was the locomotive’s engineer.” (Dick Stanley, Austin American-Statesman 02-09-2005.) In a “She helped make Austin great” editorial following Roberta’s death on 02-08-2005, the Statesman said “when you use the hike-and-bike trail, thank her.” “Lady Bird herself once said Bobbie is the engineer on the train to save Town Lake, and I am just a passenger.” (Environmental City book by William Scott Swearingen, Jr.)

City Council Member Emma Long appointed Roberta to the Parks Board in 1952, and she served until 1970 (when she suffered an aneurysm/stroke). She served as chair from 1964 to 1969.

Roberta discovered that parks were under Public Works (engineers) and worked to create today’s separate Parks and Recreation Department (PARD). Through her attorney husband (Dickson) she learned that the beach along a navigable river is public land. Under the Town Lake Plan, the Parks Board and PARD succeeded in getting the sand beach area “and everything that we dared lay our fingers on and to try to widen it as much as we could” designated as the Town Lake Corridor. So the width of the trail around the lake is due in no small part to her efforts.

When Longhorn Dam was completed to create Town Lake in 1960, she fought against commercializing it. She successfully fought to keep motorboats off the lake and

successfully got the City Council to deny a proposed Little Texas amusement venue. Little Texas would have used 40 acres of the lake plus shoreline and land, with a sky ride across the lake plus a submarine in the lake. She was unsuccessful in stopping a Fiesta Garden water ski show (like Cypress Gardens in Florida), but later it went broke.

With her own funds, she built a flagstone walkway down to the shore at First Street and Congress Avenue and planted 395 flowering trees along the lake's shoreline on both sides of Lamar Blvd. In 1969, she founded the Austin Environmental Council which campaigned to create hike-and-bike trails. (Please note that all these efforts were years before the 1971 involvement of Ann and Mayor Roy Butler). She also persuaded TXDOT to build a footbridge across Lady Bird Lake beneath the MoPac bridge in order to link both sides of the Ann & Roy Butler hike-and-bike trail. The footbridge was dedicated in 2005 as the Roberta Crenshaw Walkway (visible only to folks on the trail).

Roberta once said, "Culturally, I've helped, but the main thing I did was to create an environmental awareness of the City of Austin." (Austin American-Statesman 02-09-2005).

In my opinion, the information in these pages shows that Roberta Crenshaw has made "exceptional contributions to the betterment of this community or the parks system" and thus highly deserves having the name ROBERTA CRENSHAW SHORES on the lakeshore. (Would new rules mean Austin sells park names? Austin American-Statesman 10-09-2012).

