

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



EDDIE RODRIGUEZ

FIFTY-FIRST DISTRICT

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the effort to rename the Metz Recreation Center in East Austin after Rodolfo "Rudy" Mendez, a beloved community leader whose loss is and will continue to be felt by many.

Rudy Mendez lived a selfless and creative life, demonstrating a lifelong commitment to community service and a rare talent for dance and performance arts.

Rudy founded Ballet East Dance Company in 1978, an East Austin institution. Ballet East Dance Company is known for its outreach to local Black and Hispanic youth and award-winning initiatives like "Dare to Dance," which has been recognized by the President's Committee on the Arts & Humanities as one of the top after-school programs in the nation. Under Rudy's leadership, Ballet East Dance Company has also provided incredible career advancement opportunities to countless young choreographers and dancers, both here in the United States and across the world.

As a native Austinite, Rudy understood the opportunities and challenges that East Austin has faced throughout our city's history. Rudy could have pursued an international life for himself, but he chose to build his life in East Austin because he loved this community and the people who make it such a special place. Many young people who live in Austin's historically underserved communities would have lacked creative enrichment opportunities if it were not for Rudy Mendez and his combined passions for community service and art.

My experience as a state representative for East Austin has been that our recreation centers are centers of gravity in the lives of the communities they serve. Given their importance, I believe that a recreation center's name should reflect and uplift its community's identity and values. As you work to identify a new namesake for the Metz Recreation Center, I strongly encourage you to consider Rodolfo "Rudy" Mendez.

Rudy established a legacy of empowering others through dance and performance arts in East Austin and around the world, leaving a lasting impression on all who met him. Renaming the Metz Recreation Center after Rodolfo "Rudy" Mendez would be a fitting tribute to a remarkable member of the Austin community and a strong, positive statement about our city's values.

Sincerely,

Eddie Rodriguez
State Representative, District 51

