

RESOLUTION NO. 20191205-117

WHEREAS, Rodolfo “Rudy” Mendez, a native Austinite, early in life developed a passion for dance, performance arts, and community service; and

WHEREAS, Rudy Mendez studied dance theory, technique, and composition in New York through a scholarship from the Martha Graham School, studied Flamenco in Spain, toured with various companies, and performed in off-Broadway shows; and

WHEREAS, Rudy Mendez’s passion for community service led him to Chile and Costa Rica, where as part of the Peace Corps, he worked with the minister of Education in each country and to develop performing arts and outreach programs for youth; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, Rudy Mendez founded Ballet East Dance Company, which has for over 40 years, been true to its mission to provide a platform for young choreographers and dancers on a national and international level and to develop vigorous outreach to Black and Hispanic communities in East Austin; and

WHEREAS, Rudy Mendez has been driven in his work by a conviction that theater and dance can transform lives and serve as powerful community development tools to equip young people in East Austin with discipline and confidence; and

WHEREAS, Rudy has selflessly dedicated his work to providing free lessons to multiple generations of young students and provided paid opportunities to dancers and choreographers; and

WHEREAS, by successfully securing funding and grants, including from the Texas Commission of Arts, Rudy Mendez has led award-winning efforts like Dare to Dance which has been recognized by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities as a top after-school program in the nation; and

WHEREAS; as the East Austin community has faced countless challenges, Rudy Mendez rose up for his community and provided necessary resources and support to the youth, and has long been admired and respected by many as a leader of East Austin; and

WHEREAS, the Confederate Monuments Resolution No. 20171005-031 revealed that the original land on which Metz Recreation Center is located was acquired by a bond purchase in 1933, opened in 1972 and named after Hamilton M. Metz: Captain Co. E, 33rd Texas Cavalry (Confederate Vet), also school board member 1903-1915; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is committed to undoing its racist past and dedicated to honoring the long time Austin community members who have dedicated their lives to the betterment of the Austin communities, such as Rodolfo "Rudy" Mendez, who through his continuous acts of service for the youth in East Austin has been recognized as a leader;


NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL:

In recognition of Rudy's leadership and steadfast commitment to preserving and sharing the culture of the East Austin Community through his service and art, City Council directs the City Manager to initiate proceedings per § 14-1-34 of the City Code for the re-

naming of the “Metz Recreation Center” to the “Rodolfo ‘Rudy’ Mendez Recreation Center”.

ADOPTED: December 5, 2019

ATTEST: 
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk