



City of Arts & Innovation

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: AUGUST 2, 2022**

**FROM: CITY CLERK      WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: 2021 CITY SPIRIT AWARD**

## **ISSUE:**

Select community member(s) that exemplifies community spirit, good citizenship, and dedication to enhancing the quality of life in the City for the 2021 City Spirit Award.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council select a nominee(s) for consideration for the 2021 City Spirit Award to honor their extraordinary deeds and community spirit, good citizenship, and dedication to enhancing the quality of life in the City.

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

On July 19, 2022, the Mayor's Nominating and Screening Committee with Chair Lock Dawson and Committee Members Cervantes, Perry, and Conder referred all nominations that are accompanied by a brief biography or synopsis for nomination to the City Council for consideration. Below is a list of the nominees for the 2021 City Spirit Award:

<b>2021 CITY SPIRIT AWARD NOMINATIONS</b>	
<b>Recommended by:</b>	<b>Nominee</b>
Mayor Lock Dawson	Jennifer Vaughn-Blakely (posthumously)
Councilmember Edwards	Tom Donahue
Councilmember Perry	Lynn Heatley
Councilmember Cervantes	Darlene Trujillo and Nancy Melendez
Councilmember Cervantes	Jalani Bakari
Councilmember Cervantes	Vivian and Turner Stancil
Councilmember Cervantes	Residente of Eastside Active in Leadership: Norma Moyoroqui, Griselda Martínez, Maria Ochoa, Louise Matus, and Jackie McNulty
Councilmember Conder	Duane and Kelly Roberts
Councilwoman Plascencia	Cindy Collins Mendoza
Councilwoman Plascencia	Art Alcaraz
Councilwoman Plascencia	Gabe Maldonado
Councilwoman Plascencia	Ninfa Delgado

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Mayor and City Council have honored a community member each year since the establishment of the City Spirit Award in 1995. The prior award recipients are listed below.

<b>CITY SPIRIT AWARD RECIPIENTS</b>			
1995	Dickey DeLoss	2008	San Huang
1996	Rich Biber	2009	Cindy Roth
1997	Michael Goldware	2010	Kathy Allavie
1998	Rose Mayes	2011	Jane Block
1999	Rita Norton	2012	Stan Morrison
2000	Vic Miceli	2013	Debbie Guthrie
2001	Daniel Hantman	2014	Gordon Bourns
2002	William Gavitt	2015	Anthony Rivera
2003	Dell Roberts	2016	Henry Coil
2004	Stan Brown	2017	Ruben and Diana Ayala
2005	Jim Erickson	2018	Brian Jaramillo
2006	Natividad Fuentes	2019	Zack Earp
2007	Damon Castillo	2020	Ofelia Valdez-Yeager

## **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The City Council selection of a community member for consideration for the 2021 City Spirit Award contributes to **Strategic Plan Priority #5 – High Performing Government** and **Goal 5.3** - Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.

This item aligns with the 5 Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The selection process for a City Spirit Award recipient is transparent and promotes civic engagement by recognizing community members whose activities and actions serve the public interest, benefit the City’s diverse populations, and result in greater public good.
2. **Equity** – The City Spirit Award promotes equity as it is a citywide honor and nominees may be chosen from any and all Wards. The positive impact of the nominees’ extraordinary deeds and community spirit, good citizenship, and dedication to enhancing the quality of life in the City benefit the entire community.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – This item is neutral toward this Cross-Cutting Thread.

4. **Innovation** – The City Spirit Award promotes recognition of community members whose contribution include building collaborative partnerships and embracing adaptive processes to meet the community changing needs and preparing for the future.
5. **Sustainability and Resiliency** – The City Spirit Award promotes recognition of community members' contribution to the community's needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future and ensuring the City's capacity to persevere, adapt and grow during good and difficult times alike.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Donesia Gause, City Clerk

Concurs with:



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PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON, Chair  
Mayor's Nominating and Screening Committee

## City Spirit Award Nominee Biographies

### **Jennifer Vaughn-Blakely**

*Nominated by Mayor Lock Dawson*

Jennifer Vaughn-Blakely served as an assistant to Riverside's city manager from 1994 to 1997, and was previously an assistant city manager in Fontana. She served on Riverside's Ethics Ad-Hoc Committee, helping draft the city's ethics code. She also worked for over a decade with Riverside County's health department on mental health outreach programs for the Black community and served on a police advisory commission. In the late 1990s, Vaughn-Blakely, Rose Mayes and other community leaders started The Group, and Vaughn-Blakely became its first president. The Group worked with the Riverside African-American Historical Society to make sure the Black community was represented and heard. She founded the Eleanor Jean Grier Leadership Academy, which trains leaders and has had over 150 graduates. Vaughn-Blakely was recognized by the YWCA as a Woman of Achievement in 2005, among other awards.

### **Tom Donahue**

*Nominated by Councilmember Edwards*

Tom Donahue is a talented community leader who embodies the spirit of service. Tom has championed neighborhood connectedness by serving as the chair for the Downtown Area Neighborhood Alliance and Riverside Neighborhood Partnership (RNP). As chair of the RNP, he created the framework for a community engagement policy which will go before City Council later this year. An advocate for community engagement city-wide, Tom has been involved in the League of Women Voters, served as the former president of the Raincross Group, and sat on the Chamber of Commerce's Downtown Business Council. In his professional life, Tom serves seniors by connecting them with resources to address food insecurity.

### **Lynn Heatley**

*Nominated by Councilmember Perry*

Lynn Heatley is the founder and Director of Love Riverside and has been the driving force behind hundreds of community wide beautification projects, volunteerism events, and doing her part in addressing food insecurity amongst our vulnerable population. The mission of Love Riverside is to inspire generosity that brings love in action to Riverside. Since 2016, Lynn Heatley has made this possible through annual serve days that have included hundreds of volunteer-led service projects supported by thousands of volunteers. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Lynn mobilized and coordinated efforts to address the issue of food insecurity amongst the most vulnerable population. Monthly food collections were hosted at Hunt Park and the items collected served local pantries. Through these efforts, Lynn has maintained a network of pantries that she continues to engage with to ensure there is enough items to serve the community. She has also worked closely with the residents at Victoria Manor and has helped facilitate a marketplace food donation system that empowers residents to select the items they desire and need. Given the success of these efforts, Lynn has been in communication with the city to partner in the Senior Marketplace Program that will help in the delivery of meals to our seniors and the Beautify Riverside initiative. Lynn has been instrumental in building and nurturing the spirit of volunteerism in the city. She is respected in the community and is always finding new ways to give back to the city. For all these reasons, it is my honor to nominate Lynn Heatley for the 2021 City Spirit Award.

**Darlene Trujillo-Elliot and Nancy Melendez**

*Nominated by Councilmember Cervantes*

Darlene Trujillo-Elliot and Nancy Melendez are residents of Riverside with their family's legacies rooted in our Riverside history known as "Los Trujillos." They founded The Spanish Town Heritage Foundation in 2014 which champions the Latino Legacy of the Inland Empire's first settlers by sharing their stories, creating cultural learning opportunities, and leading community efforts to restore and revitalize La Placita de los Trujillos, a place of history, learning, entertainment and the arts. Additionally, they founded the annual Riverside Tamale Festival in 2013 which has attracted over 40,000 people in years prior to COVID-19, generating economic revenue for the downtown businesses and community at large. The festival provides Riverside residents with a unique cultural experience showcasing the city's rich Latino heritage. The Festival is a vehicle for organizers to journey toward the vision of the restoration and rehabilitation of the Trujillo Adobe, Riverside Landmark #130, Riverside County Landmark #009, a California site of historical significance, and a site of High Potential designated by the National Park Service. The Riverside Tamale Festival attracts tourists from all over Southern California and the Southwest. **Because of their unique and extraordinary efforts to put Riverside on the map across the State and Nation, I firmly believe both these individuals exemplify the meaning and essence of the "City of Riverside - Spirit Award."**

**Residente of Eastside Active in Leadership**

*Nominated by Councilmember Cervantes*

The residents of Eastside Active in Leadership are made up of dedicated and passionate people who are committed to improving the quality of life for their neighbors and neighborhood, specifically focusing on messages that elevate healthy eating and active living. The group leaders are a core five women who have gone above and beyond to volunteer for 9+ years in this program to activate residents. Because of the trust they've fostered throughout the Eastside, hundreds of residents and youth have come out to help transform local alleyways with art and mural installations. They have partnered with our local schools to create safe walking paths, install little libraries, little free pantries and programming that promotes walkability and healthy eating. The group recently drafted and championed a local municipal ordinance known as the "Smoke Free Multi-Unit Housing Ordinance" which was passed by the City Council in May 2022. Each of these residents have given countless hours and years to advocate for their community with their goal being to make a difference that will foster positive change. They have served as an inspiration for their families, residents and are role models to many across the Eastside and Riverside. **They embody what it means to be "City Spirit" and show up every day giving and cultivating love in Riverside.**

**Duane and Kelly Roberts**

*Nominated by Councilmember Conder*

Few individuals have made a greater impact on the City of Riverside than Duane and Kelly Roberts. Thirty years ago, the Mission Inn Hotel was mired in bankruptcy, shuttered and surrounded by a chain link fence. The Roberts rescued it and completed the restoration of the Mission Inn, ensuring that the beautiful historic hotel once again served as the cornerstone of the City, transforming it into a world-class destination with an award-winning spa and restaurants. The renaissance of the Mission Inn by the Roberts was the catalyst for the economic revitalization of Downtown Riverside, which has blossomed into an economic engine for Riverside. The Roberts also created the annual Historic Mission Inn Hotel & Spa Festival of Lights, the City's premier event, which annually draws thousands of visitors and international attention to Riverside and contributes over \$120 million in economic benefit to the local economy. Riverside is where Duane Roberts invented the frozen burrito at his family's meat company, Butcher Boy Food Products, Inc., which became one of the City's major employers in the 1960s and 70s, and the Roberts have continued to give back to the community through their support of local schools and non-profits, including the Mary S. Roberts Pet Adoption Center, named in honor of Mr. Roberts' mother. Through their vision, commitment and support of our Community, Duane and Kelly Roberts have embodied the Spirit of Riverside.

**Cindy Collins Mendoza**

*Nominated by Councilwoman Plascencia*

Cindy Collins is a long-standing community leader for the Casa Blanca neighborhood. She has championed issues such as neighborhood safety, building a neighborhood school, and improving the quality of life for her community. Cindy has been on the Casa Blanca Community Action Group Board for several decades and she is the current president.

**Art Alcaraz**

*Nominated by Councilwoman Plascencia*

Art Alcaraz has served on countless non-profit boards through his lifetime. He is currently Vice President of the Riverside Latino Network though he has lead as their president for several terms in the past twenty years. Art has volunteered countless hours helping raise funds for the Cesar Chávez Monument as well as for The Cheech Museum.

**Gabe Maldonado**

*Nominated by Councilwoman Plascencia*

Gabe Maldonado is the CEO of TruEvolution and a true champion for the LGBTQIA+ community. Gabe sat on the President Of The United States Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS under former President Barack Obama. He has brought millions into the region through his new efforts Project Legacy. Gabe's dedication and plight for the LGBTQIA+ Is unmatched.

**Ninfa Delgado**

*Nominated by Councilwoman Plascencia*

Ninfa Delgado's leadership ranges from her work with the UCR Chicano Latino Alumni Association, Eastside Riverside HEAL Zone, Unidos, and many more. She has dedicated her adult life to giving back to the Riverside community. Ninfa continues to work toward equity and inclusion for all residents.