

On May 20, 2015, at 2:45 PM, Alma Moya <amoya@cnusd.k12.ca.us> wrote:

Subject: Letter to City Regarding Proposed Renaming of Ysmael Villegas Gymnasium

Let me introduce myself as a proud niece of Ysmael Villegas. I am emailing in regards to the proposed renaming of the gymnasium at Villegas Park. Ysmael Villegas was a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and I find it emotionally challenging to hear that the Ayala family wants to name the gymnasium at Villegas Park after Glen and Mary Ayala.

There are many people who give back to the community, but there should be a different way of recognizing this other than renaming the gymnasium at a park that is named after a man who gave his life for our country and fought for our freedom. I understand this is just a gymnasium but I feel the entire park should stay as the Ysmael Villegas Park, Ysmael Villegas gymnasium, and Ysmael Villegas fields. Since this is the third time I have heard of families in Casa Blanca wanting to rename parts of Villegas Park, I would like to suggest that perhaps a memorial/honor wall can be erected that can be used to memorialize or honor those people who do good things in the community, and to accomplish this without having to rename the Villegas Park Gymnasium. I honestly believe this will not be the last time a family in the community will try to rename a part of the park, therefore a memorial/honor wall may help provide many more such opportunities to remember and honor community members.

Let's not forget Ysmael Villegas fought and died for our freedoms the day before he turned 21. Ysmael saved many lives and is one of the greatest recognized heroes. Ysmael Villegas' citation reads "Through his heroism and indomitable fighting spirit, S/Sgt. Villegas, at the cost of his life, inspired his men to a determined attack in which they swept the enemy from the field".

Please do not rename the gymnasium at Villegas Park.

I would like for this request and the suggested memorial/honor wall idea to be kept anonymous, as I and my family still live in the community, and we see the Ayala family on a daily basis.

Ms. Moya
Santiago High School
Math Department

On May 21, 2015, at 6:58 AM, Curt McCracken <Curt.McCracken@toro.com> wrote:

Hello Mr. Davis, my name is Curt McCracken and I was recently informed that the park named after medal of honor recipient Staff Sergeant Ysmael R. Villegas, the first Riverside County resident to ever receive the Medal of Honor and the first veteran to be buried at the Riverside National Cemetery when the cemetery opened in 1978, may be having the park split up with other memorials of neighborhood folks. This park was dedicated not only to this man of uncommon valor, but also other distinguished veterans who sacrificed their lives to keep this country free...Splitting up the park would be diminishing the act of bravery that was recognized for Staff Sergeant Villegas and other veterans that are identified in this park. It should remain honored,unforgotten and unchanged.

Respectfully, Corporal McCracken C.O. (U.S.M.C. 89-93)

On May 20, 2015, at 11:06 AM, Anna Alfaro <Anna.Alfaro@toro.com> wrote:

Good afternoon Mr. Davis,

First of all I would like to let you know I am a Niece of Ysmael Villegas. My Mother, Ysmael's Sister Rafaela Villegas Bedolla. I really do not understand this naming different sections of the park's center after people of the neighborhood. I am all for the Memorialization of these people but not renaming of sections of the center. I really think maybe a "Memorial Wall" with plaques of these Casa Blanca people that would like to memorialize their beloved family members is a better idea than that of renaming sections of the center. I understand there will be a meeting the 29th. Or at least the Ayala family is saying this not sure. Since I am a member of the Villegas family I too feel offended. My Uncle died for this country and I am very proud to be a member of this family. Please do not get me wrong Mr. Glen Ayala and Mrs. Mary Ayala were members of this community and Yes they should have some sort of recognition. Again I am leaning towards A Memorial Wall or a Tree with a Plaque in front of it. Or who knows stepping stones with their names. Something else. But not renaming of the Gymnasium. My Mother is not in too good of health, But I am pretty sure she will try her best to be at this meeting when it takes place.

Thank you,
Anna Villegas Alfaro

From: Gilbert Pryor [firegil1@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2015 5:12 PM
To: Davis, Paul
Subject: Disagreement

Never forgotten, forever Honored

Four words that mean everything to a soldier, a soldiers family a soldiers friends, a soldiers community and a soldiers country . Some gave a lot . Some gave everything without asking what do I get in return . I am completely Disappointed and shocked that I am writing this letter especially on a weekend that our country honors all those who have served . But we must do this to remind people who have forgotten or have never known the feeling of the soldier and their family and every life that soldiers touched who has been called to duty . Staff Sergeant Ysmael Villegas was my uncle and I will not stand by and let you destroy the places names that have been placed there in his Honor . It makes me very angry that people in a political position are expecting this soldiers name and everything he stands for and fought for to be wiped away . He fought Gallentry on that mountain and gave the ultimate sacrifice and nobody especially you has the right to ask him to quit his post . Our flag flies high , proud and majestically and always will thanks to my uncle and every other soldier who has fought for it . And our family will not let you take away what he has earned with his blood and courage !!! Please do the right thing . Our uncle fought for all of us even you it is our turn to fight for him ... Thank you

CC:

Mayor
City Council
City Manager
City Attorney
Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director

On May 23, 2015, at 5:52 PM, Yolanda Lopez <yolandamlopez69@gmail.com> wrote:

I am a niece of Smiley Villegas my mother is sister of smiley . I understand that the Ayala family wants the gym renamed after their parents. I understand they are proud of their parents for the help they put in ,but we do not approve of this . The dedication was made in honor of my uncle parked and the other part is going to be taken away what's going to be next I don't think that's right he gave his life for his country.

CC:

Mayor
City Council
City Manager
City Attorney
Parks, Recreations and Community Services Director

From: Lorraine Manzanares [lpmanzanares@yahoo.com]

Sent: Sunday, May 24, 2015 4:47 PM

To: Davis, Paul

Subject: Villegas Gym

I am voicing my opinion in hopes that it will be heard. I am a niece of Ismael Villegas and do not agree with you changing the name of the ymnasiam at the Villegas Park in Riverside. It was named in honor of my Uncle for serving his country. You cant just take that away from him or us. Its just not right. There are already other parts of the center named after other people. What eventually will be left named after my uncle in his honor if this coninue?

I hope that you will find some other way to honor Glen and Mary Ayala without taking from My Uncle or my family.

*Always,
Lorraine Manzanares*

CC:

Mayor

City Council

City Manager

City Attorney

Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director

From: <forever000039@gmail.com>

Date: May 28, 2015 at 11:15:02 PM PDT

To: "PDavis@riversideca.gov" <PDavis@riversideca.gov>

Subject: Ysmael Villegas

Mr. Davis,

My name is Teresa Guardado and my uncle is Ysmael Villegas, the Congressional Medal of Honor recipient. I'm writing this email to urge the City of Riverside not to rename any part, section or structure of the Ysmael Villegas Community Center or the Ysmael Villegas Park. Since the founding of the United States, there have only been 3,493 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients. This statistic speaks for itself. Please do not rename any part, section or structure of the Ysmael Villegas Community Center or the Ysmael Villegas Park.

Sincerely,
Teresa Guardado

cc:

Mayor

City Council

City Manager

City Attorney

Parks, Recreation and Community Service Director

May 28, 2015

Re: Ysmael Villegas Community Center

Congressman Davis-

I write this letter hoping it is not too late and a decision has not already been made. My delay was only because I never imaged that there would be a need to write one at all. Never thinking there was any possibility this could actually happen. Because truly, I find it hard to believe that something like this would ever occur involving any of the Washington Veteran's War Memorials.

I am writing in regards to the request to change the name of the Ysmael Villegas Community Center Gymnasium. My Uncle Smiley is Riverside's ONLY native-born recipient of our nation's highest military honor, the Medal of Honor. He gave his life for us and his Country, the day before his 21st birthday. In recognition of his "Courage and Valor", the community center and park was dedicated to and named for him in his honor. And now there is a chance that this will be taken from him.

It saddens me to think that men and woman that fight and give so much for us and their Country can still be stripped of things after their passing. Does their battle ever end? I would like to know if this is a normal occurrence, is this how our War Heroes, Medal of Honor Recipients, and Veterans are treated? Or does this just happen in smaller cities? If these are not questions you cannot answer for me, then maybe you can advise me as to who exactly in Washington I need to address them to?

I understand and can appreciate recognizing people for their accomplishments but shouldn't it be done without taking the Honor away from someone it was already bestowed upon. I am shocked and wonder why it would now be consider for Glen & Mary Ayala, when a recent request for a name change was denied to a fellow Medal of Honor Recipient, Salvador Lara?

I thank you in advance for you time, it is greatly appreciated by me, as well as my family's, my friends and even fellow Veterans. We eagerly await your response in this matter, as time is of the essence.

Sincerely,

Michele B. Baldi

cc:

Mayor
City Council
City Manager
City Attorney
Parks, Recreation and Community Service Director

May 26, 2015

Paul Davis
Riverside City Council Member
Riverside, CA 9251

Via: E-Mail to pdavis@riversideca.gov

Subject: Renaming the gym portion of the Villegas Community Center

Dear Mr. Davis;

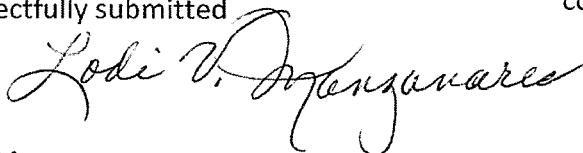
In the pass Dario Villegas spoke on behalf of the Villegas family. Following his passing, I Lodi Manzanares have been asked to assume the spokesmen position for the surviving Villegas family members (siblings to Ysmael R. Villegas, Riverside County's first reception of the Congressional Medal of Honor). The nine surviving Villegas family members are as follows;

Gloria Aguilar, Riverside Ca. (Ward 4)
Rafaela Bedolla, Riverside Ca. (Ward 4)
Lodi Manzanares, Beaumont, Ca.
Arthur Villegas, Riverside Ca. (Ward 3)
Frank Villegas, Vacaville, Ca.
Beatrice Zamora, Riverside, Ca. (Ward 4)
Petra Pryor, Buhl, Id
Rudy Villegas, Riverside, Ca. (Ward 3)
Martha Diaz, Riverside, Ca. (Ward 4)

The current proposal to name the gym portion of Villegas Community Center, after the "Ayalas" was recently discussed among the family members in order to establish the Villegas family's position. The results of a vote between the nine surviving Villegas family members are as follows; 8 members Not in Favor, 1 member In favor. We questioned the idea of subdividing areas within the building or subdividing the Community Center as a method to recognize individuals, groups or organizations.

We thank you for your time, and ask that in the future, if there is anything that may involve the Villegas name, please contact me (Lodi Manzanares) at (951) 845-4542 or a second contact is Ruben Manzanares at (951) 769-6634 or cell phone (951) 906-1538.

Respectfully submitted



Lodi Manzanares
Spokesmen for the Villegas Family Members

cc:

Mayor
City Council
City Manager
City Attorney
Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director

Copies to: Rusty Bailey, Mayor City of Riverside
Adolfo Cruze, Director of Parks & Rec., City of Riverside