



GREG COX
CHAIRMAN

San Diego County Board of Supervisors

August 9, 2013

Camille Pekarck
Planning Intern
Historical Resource Board
City Administration Building
202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Ms. Pekarck,

As Supervisor for the First District of the San Diego County, it is my pleasure to support the William J. Oakes Boys and Girls Club's application to become designated as an historical site.

Countless young people have benefited from the positive experiences they received by being members of the William J. Oakes Boys and Girls Club. The club has been a significant contributor to the development of life within the community of Logan Heights and continues to serve as a culture and social anchor for our community. The club's long standing history is all the more reason for it to become a San Diego designated historical site.

The building was named after William J. Oakes, the Boys Club founder and first African-American principal in the San Diego School District. The original "Rec Room" building was built in 1942 during World War II. Its funding and costs were supported by an entire community effort. Previous members have gone on to achieve great things in the world by applying the principles taught to them at the Boys and Girls Club. It was, and continues to be, a symbol of dedication and hope.

The William J. Oakes Boys and Girls Club Groundwork is a San Diego landmark. I appreciate your consideration of the Alumni Association's proposal and respectfully request your support.

Sincerely,


GREG COX
Chairman

Cecil Steppe

To: cipekarek@sandiego.gov; Barbara Jo Smith
Subject: Request for Historical Designation for Oakes Branch Boys & Girls Club

Cecil H. Steppe
5988 Wenrich Place
San Diego, Ca 92120
August 19, 2013

Dear Ms. Camille Pekarek

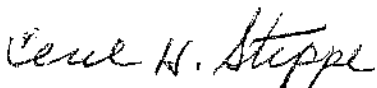
I am written at the request of the Alumni Association of the Oakes Branch Boys and Girls Club of San Diego in support of our application to be established by your organization as a historical site. Because of our history as the first Boys Club established in San Diego in 1941 by William J. Oakes our principal at Memorial Junior High School located in Logan Heights.

My name is Cecil H. Steppe a member of the William J. Oakes branch boys Club, now known as the William J. Oakes Boys & Girls Club, since it opened. I came to San Diego at the age of one year with my Mother and two older brothers to live with her sister and brother after divorcing my father. I have remained a residence for 79 of my 80 years of life. Prior to the club opening there were very limited areas for youth to engage in team and recreational activities. With the opening the opportunity to gather, engage in sports, wood working and other activities but most importantly given the opportunity for those of us without a father, under the guidance of Coach Augie Escamilla, a college student who taught us how to develop into strong dedicated men who continue through The Alumni Association blaze the trail to assure youth in our underserved community will have the opportunity to develop strong character and other skills as a boy & girls club to further enhance our community.

I attribute my latter success in my 35 years of county service to the lesson learned while under the teaching of Augie and other adults in our community. For 28 years I served as a Probation Officer and for the last 12 years of services served as the Chief Probation Officer of San Diego County. The department was the 2nd largest probation Department in the State. We had a budget of over \$40 Million dollars and a staff of 1500.

After retiring from the Department I was asked to serve for a 90 day period as the Director of Social Services while they did a nation search for replacing the then Director who was under inquiry by the Grand Jury for inadequate services for services to welfare recipients and their families. I volunteered to remain after finding out the difficulties faced with families who were losing the man in their families by removing them from their families to receive services. The department of Social Services was the largest department in the county with 35 district offices, 3000 staff and a budget of over \$9 million dollars. I served for 6 years as the Director. I retired after 35 years of service. I contribute my work ethics and desire to serve my community based on the influences of my relationship with the lessons learned as a member of the club.

I continue my efforts to improve the environment for youth in the southeastern community by engaging in the enhancement of services in our underserved community in Southeast San Diego. We request that the city do us the service of establishing the Oakes Branch of the Boys & Girls Club of San Diego become an Historical Site, because of its history of distinguish service and accomplishment over the 70 plus years of service to our community.



Cecil H. Steppe

The San Diego Boy's Club Where a Fertile Environment Was Created

My enthusiasm for sports began when I was ten years old, at a pick-up football game in the Bakersfield, California area where I lived at that time. I competed with, and against, RaFer Johnson, and Bob Mathias who both later became Olympic Decathlon Champions. The late Bob Mathias also became a California State Senator.

At the age of twelve, when I returned to San Diego, the Marcy Street Boy's Club became my daily hangout. When I was able to save enough money, I purchased a Boy's Club Membership Card (my first ID): No longer was it necessary for me to ask for a special pass, nor the need for my friends to find ways to "sneak" me into the Club.

Little did I know at the time that this tiny membership card would become my passport to a world I had yet to see — sports, recreational activities, arts and crafts, and several other personalized/social/cultural events. Many of these activities would not have been possible for me without the numerous unnamed, dedicated sponsors, who gave more than just their names to the Southeast Community.

At the Boy's Club, my favorite activities included track & field, wrestling, and boxing. In most individual events one had to qualify in the top three (3) in one's class in order to compete in the Southern California Championship. The Marcy Street Boy's Club won the Southern California Championship in Track and Field each year that I was a member.

When I attended San Diego High School this winning tradition continued for me; lettering in three sports for three years. In my senior year I was voted Captain of the football and wrestling team. I was also the recipient of the Gold Track Shoe Pendant in Track and Field. We were city champions in Football, Track and Field all three years. In wrestling, we won the SCIF championship all three years.

While serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, boxing, football, and wrestling were my M.O.S. In wrestling, I was a member of the "All Marine Team" and the "Olympic Team." After my tour of duty was over in the military service, I spent 40 years working in the Air Craft industry. I started as an Aircraft Painter. Later I went into the Quality Control Field: from Inspector, to Engineer, to Manager, to Field Manager for FAA and the Space System Division with the quest of landing a man on the moon.

The Marcy Street Boy's Club became my "gateway" for reaching out to help other youth organizations, such as, Archie Moore's ABC (Any Boy Can) Program, and the Torrance, California Junior Achievement Board of Directors.

I want to thank all those known, and unknown, who had the vision to start the first Boy's Club in San Diego which guided and inspired me on my trip from boyhood to manhood.

**I am,
Ermon Johnson**

Attention: Camile Pekarek
Planning Intern
Historical Resources - Planning Division

Enclosing letter of support in consideration of the
William J. Oakes Boys & Girls Club becoming an
historical site.

Thanking you in advance for and assistance you
might be in seeing this becoming a reality.

Nonie Beach
Nonie Beach
Wm. J. Oakes Boys & Girls Club
Treasurer

My brothers name was Carlos Ramirez

My name is Nonie Beach - I am a native San Diegan and would like to say a few words regarding the Wm. J. Oaks Boys & Girls Club. I did not attend the boys & girls club which at the time was only for boys. My older brother Carlos joined in the early 40's. He went on to become the first Mexican American of mixed heritage to win numerous honors in the field of "midget auto racing". With his moral upbringing & being a part of the boys & girls club instilled in him many honorable characteristics. He joked that he couldn't afford to use the swimming pool because he didn't even owe a pair of swim trunks. My Mother would not have approved of that remark. I am sorry to add that he is deceased & would have loved to have seen the club become an historical site.

Even though I do not and did not live in the area I was impressed at how much the Wm. J. Oaks Boys & Girls Club Alumni Association has done and continue to do for the youth in the area. This attracted me to the prospect of assisting in the much needed area of our fair city. Since its inception the Alumni Association has contributed over \$20,000 in scholarships for high school student in the area; ^{WITH} along making available Christmas gifts, having a yearly pizza night, and an awards assembly. The alumni association bears the total financial burden of all these events.

Our hope and wish is to see the club being the oldest standing in the state designated a historical site.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

September 7, 2013

Camille Pekarek, Planning Intern
Historical Resources – Planning Division
Development Services Department
City of San Diego, 1222 First Avenue, MS 512
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Historical Board:

My name is Sammy J. Taylor. As a youngster from a low income family, my brothers, Leroy John Taylor, Theodore Taylor and myself was able to attend the Boys Club, which was renamed in honor of the founder, William J. Oakes. His vision for the youth of San Diego in the Logan Heights community, provided a safe environment. We learned important life skills. We were mentored by great staff members, who were our role models who helped us learn life skills we still use today and pass on to our family members and other youth in our communities.

We were able to participate not only in all areas of sports, but wood classes, art classes, swimming, communication skills and education. We were a diverse group of youngsters who learned to respect every individual. We were treated with respect, learned how to set goals and achieve them, problem solving, respect your family, teachers and others. Learned good study habits and made lifetime friendships.

Coach Augie Escamilla, was a powerful force in the lives of us youngsters. He was the Coach at the Boys Club. He was a great mentor, leader and he cared about us. He taught us good sportsmanship, whether we won or lost. He instilled confidence in us. We took the knowledge we learned and applied it throughout our lifes and also give back to the community that shaped and molded us.

The Boys Club gave us an opportunity to excel. Many became professional athletics, even an Olympic Volleyball Champion, Honorable Judge Napoleon Jones, Jr., Honorable Earl B. Gilliam, lawyers, District Attorneys, musicians, teachers, ministers, artists, detectives, coaches, armed forces, professional business owners and much, much more.

Our family are board members of the William J. Oakes Boys & Girls Alumni Association. Our motto is:
" From Oakes We Received To Oakes We Give"

Thank you for your consideration in making the William J. Oakes Boys & Girls Club an Historical Site. The youngsters it has influenced throughout the years has made a powerful impact on the community.

Sincerely,



Sammy J. Taylor



Leroy John Taylor

Anthony, Shannon

Subject: FW: The Boys Club Building

From: kstreetkid@cox.net [mailto:kstreetkid@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2013 3:59 PM
To: Pekarek, Camille L
Subject: The Boys Club Building

Dear Ms Pekarek,

Here are my thoughts regarding the designation of the Boys Club building as a Historic Site. I hope they are appropriate;

In 1944 my family moved from 22nd and K st. to East San Diego. I transferred in the 8th grade from Memorial Jr. High to Wilson Jr. High.

Due to housing patterns, there were only 4 minority students enrolled in Wilson; 1 Black, 1 Filipino, 1 Chinese and one Mexican-American, me. We were all treated well and accepted into the student body with no instances of discrimination. The following year while playing for a Wilson basketball team in a tournament at San Diego High School, I became aware of the existence of a Boys Club team called the Aces. The center on that team, Charlie Powell decided to concentrate on boxing and left the team which left an opening for me. Augie Escamilla, the Boys Club coach said I could take his place if I could afford the 10cent annual membership fee. The Aces was an ethnically diverse team, Neale Henderson, Thomas Steppe, Freddie Davis, African Americans, Wellmon Hom, and Jimmie Sue, Chinese and me, plus others whose names elude me.

The aforementioned is an example of how the Boys Club Building served as a beacon in making it possible for young, somewhat poor, minority boys to go on to successful careers and made positive contributions to the City of San Diego and helped the community get through the tumultuous 1960s without the violence experienced in the States of the Deep South.

Charlie Powell, is considered by many to be the best all-around athlete to come from San Diego and had a successful career in the National Football League and as a top ranked Heavy Weight boxer. More important, in my view, is that Boys Club Alumnia have become Judges, San Diego County Department Administrators, Military Officers and some even gave their life during the Korean War.

For the above reasons, I endorse the designation of the Boys Club Building as a Historic Site.

Feel free to contact me if you feel I can be of more assistance.

Ed Mendoza
9377 Monona Drive
La Mesa, CA 91942
619-463-1288