



Committee on Chicano Rights

710 East Third Street · National City, CA 91950 · (619) 477-3800

November 7, 2001

**Robert Greigo, President
Board of Trustees
Sweetwater Union High School District
1130 Fifth Avenue,
Chula Vista, CA 91911**

Facsimile: (619) 585-7380

Mr. Greigo:

Regarding the Sweetwater Union High School District's, (SWUHSD) 16 inductees (SD Union 11-07-01) into the district's "Hall of Fame," to "help inspire students." It is unbelievable, truly unbelievable (but not surprising) that in the year 2001 the Board of Trustees (3 of 5 whom are supposedly of Mexican ancestry) and Superintendent Ed Brand could not establish a process to find one individual (since 1922) from the Mexican American community to be inducted into their so-called "Hall of Fame." This in a district where the majority of taxpayers, parents and students are of Mexican ancestry!

Whatever the district's reason(s) whether a bad process, oversight, ignorance, monetary (buttering up individuals who donated hundred of thousands of dollars), or just good old boy business as usual, the exclusion of the Mexican-American community can only be labeled as another "arrogant put down, slap in the face and gross insult," by the Board of Trustees and Superintendent Brand.

Even more incredible is the fact that from the top of my head I can easily name numerous politicians (governor, city council persons, trustees, etc.) judges, lawyers, sports figures, singers and others distinguished alumni of Mexican ancestry whom you excluded, that could of have been selected.

What is even worse is the fact that by excluding hundreds of distinguished accomplished Mexican American alumni the district has done a great disservice to the majority of Mexican American students. A population which suffers a massive dropout rate, low scores and numerous educational ills. I am certain that this population would have benefited, and might have even been "inspired" by Mexican American "role models" who look like them and probably shared similar experiences, to help them address their problems. Ironically, if the district's intent was to establish the "Hall of Fame" to "help inspire students" their decision to exclude now guarantees the exact opposite. In fact one can fairly assume that Mexican American students will not be "inspired" or (as per the article) ever state, "Oh my, this could be me."

Whatever the reason(s) shame, shame, shame on the Board of Trustees, and Superintendent Brand who are responsible for the process of excluding distinguished Mexican American alumni, denying Mexican American student an opportunity, and for devaluing the honor for the 16 recipients that were chosen.

Herman Baca

Cc. News Media



Committee on Chicano Rights

710 East Third Street · National City, CA 91950 · (619) 477-3800

November 19, 2001

**Robert Greigo, President
Board of Trustees
Sweetwater Union High School District
1130 Fifth Avenue,
Chula Vista, CA 91911**

Facsimile: (619) 585-7380

Mr. Greigo:

For the record, to date for whatever reason(s) you as President of the Sweetwater Union High School District Board of Trustees have failed to respond to our November 7, 2001 letter. The letter was forwarded to you, and raised questions and issues relating to an 11/07/01 San Diego Union article entitled, "District plans hall of fame to help inspire students"

That you have failed to respond is not only disturbing, but also "unprofessional" and makes a mockery of representative government. One has to question if this failure to respond is not "standard operating procedure" for the Board of Trustees, and how parents, students, voters and taxpayers are treated when issues of concern are presented?

Whatever the reason(s), I am still waiting for your response.

In closing let me ask, since you are now a candidate seeking election to the Chula Vista City Council, if elected, will you do the same (as you have done) to your new constituents of residents, voters, and taxpayers by not responding to their concerns?

Waiting for your response,

**Herman Baca,
President**




OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
• 1130 FIFTH AVENUE • CHULA VISTA, CALIFORNIA 91911-2896
(619) 691-5555 • FAX (619) 498-1997

Edward M. Brand, Ed.D.
Superintendent

November 20, 2001

Herman Baca
710 East 3rd St.
National City, CA 91955

Dear Mr. ~~Baca~~: 

Per our conversation on Monday, November 19th, I would like to summarize the topics we discussed and further clarify the procedures followed for the *Hall of Fame* selection process. Also, as a result of our conversation, we will attempt to improve our process to make it more inclusive in response to the needs of all concerned.

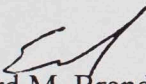
As you recall, we indicated that over 50,000 solicitations were mailed (in both English and Spanish) to homes throughout the South County. In addition, we included all chambers of commerce, key communicators, business associations, as well as 16 media outlets throughout San Diego. Over eight articles about the nomination process, as well as a list of inductees, appeared in the Union Tribune, Star News, and various community newspapers. The nomination process lasted for about three months, and the Sweetwater District received approximately 140 nominations. We also mentioned that there were 16 members on the review panel, half of which were people of color. The criterion for selecting this year's nominees was that they had received regional, national, or international acclaim.

We also discussed the fact that the Sweetwater District is willing to make changes in the selection process. We have begun by adding additional community members to the selection panel for the next round, which will begin sometime in the fall of 2002. While I understand that your timeframe does not allow you to be a member of this committee, I would appreciate it if you could keep me abreast of any community concerns that you are aware of.

As stated, the goal of the *Hall of Fame* is to recognize outstanding graduates of the Sweetwater Union High School District, provide role models for our current students, and hope that those who have become successful might choose to donate scholarships or other goods and services to the Sweetwater District to enhance student learning. While I am confident that the process was fair, I am also open enough to realize that we can always improve upon it.

I look forward to working with you in the future. My best to you and your family.

Sincerely,


Edward M. Brand, Ed.D.
Superintendent

EB:dh

C: Board of Trustees



OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

• 1130 Fifth Avenue • Chula Vista, California 91911-2896
(619) 585-4405 • FAX (619) 585-7380 •

*Robert Griego, President
Board of Trustees*

November 21, 2001

Mr. Herman Baca
Committee on Chicano Rights
710 East Third Street
National City, CA 91150

Dear Herman:

Please find attached a letter dated November 20, 2001, sent to you from Dr. Ed Brand, Superintendent of the Sweetwater Union High School District.

Immediately upon receiving your letter, I requested that Dr. Brand gather certain documents pertaining to the Alumni Hall of Fame in order to respond. Please be aware that I, in no way, intended to ignore you. I was awaiting the proper information for an accurate response. The information is contained in Dr. Brand's letter and indicates the steps taken in the selection process.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further or need additional information, please call Dr. Ed Brand to arrange a meeting. I would be happy to sit down with you to discuss any concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Griego". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Robert Griego
President, Board of Trustees



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(619) 691-5555 • FAX (619) 498-1997

Edward M. Brand, Ed.D.
Superintendent

November 20, 2001

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710 East 3rd St.
National City, CA 91955

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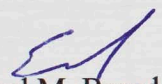
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I look forward to working with you in the future. My best to you and your family.

Sincerely,


Edward M. Brand, Ed.D.
Superintendent

EB:dh

C: Board of Trustees



Committee on Chicano Rights
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November 21, 2001

Reporter Chris Moran
SD Union
P.O. Box 120191
San Diego, CA 92112-0191

Facsimile: (619) 498-6691

"Your 12/09/00 article can only be described as another "puff" piece for the Sweetwater Union High School District and the Board of Trustees. The question is, when are you and the SD Union going to stop playing public relations agency for the SWUHSD, and start doing serious reporting?"
12/09/00, letter to Chris Moran,

Reporter Moran:

For the record, on November 7, 2001 (14 days ago) I forwarded you and SD Union editors copies of the enclosed letter. The letter was about your 11/07/01 article "District plans hall of fame to help inspire students," and was addressed to Sweetwater Union High School District (SWUHSD) Board of Trustees President, Bob Griego. Due to your article our organization received 100s of calls from irritable individuals who complained and protested the "put down, slap in the face and gross insult," because of:

- The SWUHSD Board of Trustees and Superintendent Ed Brand's inability (since 1922), to locate one individual of Mexican ancestry to be inducted into the "Hall of Fame."
- The SWUHSD Board of Trustees and Superintendent Ed Brand's exclusion of Mexican/Americans, the largest ethnic group of taxpayers, parents and students in the district from the "Hall of Fame."

Even though the above points were and remain legitimate issues of concern to the Mexican American community, you and SD Union editors chose to make them non-issues, and not to report them. The reason(s) as we have seen over the years, with other similar issues is obvious... a "yellow journalism" policy of writing bias, "puff" piece stories, and favorable articles that are written to protect and cover-up negative policy decisions by SWUHSD Trustees and Superintendent Ed Brand. The policy is very similar to the one in San Diego where the SD Union, "stonewalls" legitimate community issues of concerns and criticism of San Diego School District Trustees, and its Superintendent Alan Bersin.

The question then is, when is the SD Union going to stop playing politics and begin to report all of the news, and when will individuals who call themselves "reporters" (like yourself) start reporting the news, professionally and objectively?

In closing, because you and the SD Union profess to adhere to fair, objective and truthful reporting, even though the news is manipulated and censored I leave you with the quote below. A quote that I believe aptly applies to you, your editors and to the issues above,

"ADVERTISEMENT IS THE MOST TRUTHFUL PART OF A NEWSPAPER."
Thomas Jefferson

Herman Baca, President

Cc. Mr. Gene Bell, SD Union President/CEO, Ms. Karen Winner, Editor
Ms. Gina Lubrano, Readers Representative, Mr. James O. Goldsborough, Columnist

EL SOL
427-8342



Committee on Chicano Rights

710 East Third Street · National City, CA 91950 · (619) 477-3800

December 05, 2001

Robert Griego, President
Board of Trustees
Sweetwater Union High School District
1130 Fifth Avenue,
Chula Vista, CA 91911

Facsimile: (619) 585-7380

Re: Superintendent Edward M. Brand's 11/20/01 respond letter.

President Bob Griego and Board members:

For the record, we wrote to you (not to Superintendent Ed Brand) as president of the Sweetwater Union High School District (SWUHSD) board, and other "see and hear nothing" board members for a response to our 11/07/01 letter. We assumed as elected officials you were responsible for public policy, and that YOU would have been the ones to respond to our letter.

Obviously we were incorrect, because the response to our November 7, 2001 letter, that raised concerns over the district's exclusion and failure to choose one person of Mexican ancestry to the "Hall of Fame" instead, came from Superintendent Ed Brand. In his 11/20/01 letter (enclosed) Superintendent Brand touched on our concerns, and procedures followed for the "Hall of Fame" selection process by stating:

"As you recall, we indicated that over 50,000 solicitations were mailed (in both English and Spanish) to homes throughout the South County. In addition, we included all chambers of commerce, key communicators, business associations, as well as 16 media outlets throughout San Diego. Over eight articles about the nomination process, as well as a list of inductees, appeared in the Union Tribune, Star News, and various community newspapers. The nomination process lasted for about three months, and the Sweetwater District received approximately 140 nominations. We also mentioned that there were 16 members on the review panel, half of which were people of color. The criteria for selecting this year's nominees was that they had received regional, national, or international acclaim."

**THE QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED BY YOU AND THE BOARD IS, WHY WITH ALL OF THE ABOVE DID THE SWUHSD "SELECTION PROCESS" STILL:
FAIL TO SELECT OR INDUCT ONE PERSON OF MEXICAN ANCESTRY INTO IT'S "HALL OF FAME," WHEN MEXICAN AMERICANS MAKE-UP THE MAJORITY OF TAXPAYERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS IN THE DISTRICT?**

The answer to us is obvious, regardless of the number of flyers, hand picked "people of color" serving on your panel, newspapers, chambers of commerce, etc., the district's "selection process," (which you approved) systemically broke down.

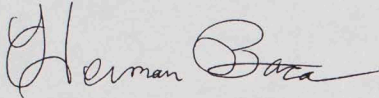
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In closing, the reasons outlined in Superintendent Brand's letter on your behalf and his statement "I am confident that the process was fair," are rejected and unacceptable to us.

We instead urge the board of trustees to (just like businesses do, Firestone Tire Company had to recall millions of tires and pay millions of dollars in damages to its customers due to a bad process) take responsibility and rectify damage done by your debunked "selection process," by initiating the following:

- 1. Immediately stop, recall, invalidate and nullify the induction on December 14, 2001 of the present "Hall of Fame."**
- 2. Immediately develop a new process to select individuals to a new "Hall of Fame." A "Hall of fame" that will replace the current "Hall of Shame," that will be inclusive and representative of the entire population of the SWUHSD.**

Waiting for your response,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Herman Baca". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Herman Baca

**Cc. Superintendent Ed Brand
News Media**



OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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*Robert Griego, President
Board of Trustees*

December 7, 2001

Mr. Herman Baca
Committee on Chicano Rights
710 East Third Avenue
National City, CA 91950

Dear Herman:

Thank you for your letter of December 5, 2001. I appreciate you taking the time to write and express your concerns.

I agree that there are probably many Hispanic, Chicano/a, or Latino/a graduates that deserve to be in the Sweetwater Hall of Fame, and I share your interest in honoring them. Please send me your nominees, whoever they may be, and I will make sure that they are considered at the time the next review process is initiated. In the meantime, hopefully we can continue to improve on our process.

Again, I want you to know that I appreciate and share your interest and concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Griego". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Robert Griego
President, Board of Trustees

FTC chairman among Sweetwater famed alumni

District plans hall of fame to help inspire students

By Chris Moran
STAFF WRITER

CHULA VISTA — Timothy Muris was a self-described "sputnik" baby, an elementary school student when the Russians launched the satellite that started the space race.

He remembered the scramble in American schools to emphasize more science and math. More than that, he remembered his Chula Vista High basketball coach and history teacher as his strongest influence as a schoolboy.

Coach Larry Ambrust, he said, was one of the people who taught him the importance of discipline, preparation and hard work.

History teacher Marilyn Boster "helped cultivate my love for history and public policy," he said.

Muris, Class of 1967, is now chairman of the Federal Trade Commission. For his career in government, Muris will be honored as one of 16 inaugural inductees into the Sweetwater Union High School District Hall of Fame in December.

The Sweetwater district plans to establish a traveling exhibition with photos and biographies of accomplished alumni from South County public high schools as an inspiration for today's students.

The honorees are:

■ Brian Bilbray, Mar Vista High, U.S. congressman from 1995 until early this year, former county supervisor and former mayor of Imperial Beach.

■ Kenneth Burns, Sweetwater High, retired U.S. Air Force major general, former deputy assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, Near East/South Asia.

■ William "Billy" Casper, Chula Vista High, golfer inducted into the World Golf and PGA halls of fame; ranks sixth on the PGA's all-time victory list.

■ Serge Dedina, Mar Vista High, author, professor and co-founder of Wildcoast, an

SEE Hall of fame, B4

► HALL OF FAME

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1

Entrepreneur now helps teens plan for future

Imperial Beach-based wildlife conservation team.

■ Gail Devers, Sweetwater High, Olympic track gold medalist.

■ Michael Ellis, Bonita Vista, co-founder of Metabolife International Inc.; the Ellis Foundation has contributed \$500,000 in scholarship funding to Sweetwater's guaranteed college admission initiative with San Diego State University.

■ Charlie Jackson, Mar Vista, high-tech entrepreneur whose companies pioneered production of graphics software.

■ Eleanor "Connie" Mariano, Mar Vista High, physician to former Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton, first Fili-

pina-American admiral in the U.S. Navy and first woman to direct the White House medical unit.

■ Mark Martensen, Hilltop High, Western art painter and sculptor of international reputation whose work has been commissioned by President George W. Bush.

■ Corky McMillin, Mar Vista High, founder and CEO of The Corky McMillin Cos.

■ Bob Payne, Sweetwater High, president and CEO of Multi-Ventures Inc., a real estate management company whose properties include the Mission Valley Hilton, Red Lion and Hanalei hotels.

■ Steve Riley, Castle Park High, 11-year member of the NFL's Minnesota Vikings.

■ Jess E. Van Deventer, Sweetwater High, commissioner of the San Diego Unified Port District and president of VanCon Corp., a design and construction firm.

■ Tom Waits, Hilltop High, Grammy Award-winning songwriter and musician; film actor.

■ The late Robert Carlton "Bob" Wilson, Sweetwater High, U.S. congressman representing South County from 1953 to 1981.

The district also will give an honorary lifetime achievement award to the late Harlan Skinner, music educator for 67 years with the Sweetwater district and founder of National City's Maytime Band Review.

Payne, Sweetwater High Class of 1951, recently hosted his 50th high school reunion in

one of his hotels, the Hanalei.

When he looked at his yearbook recently, he was reminded that his goal then was to own a grocery store.

"I always wanted to be an entrepreneur," Payne said. But, he said, "How do you know when you're 17 years old what you want to do?"

Payne now tries to help Sweetwater High students figure that out. Each day, he sends a van to National City to pick up students and bring them to his hotels to learn about the hospitality industry. And he's in the midst of donating \$100,000 toward scholarships for Sweetwater High students who want to study business at San Diego State University.

"I think it's just payback time," Payne said.

Payne was recognized for his extensive community involvement, which includes service as past president of the Boys and Girls Clubs of San Diego and as a board member for the Hall of Champions, San Diego Holiday Bowl and San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau.

An exhibit of inductees will go from school to school after the induction ceremony Dec. 14 at Loew's Coronado Bay Resort.

Castle Park Middle School Principal Jerry LaRussa proposed the hall of fame and oversaw the selection of the first inductees.

"What I hope is kids (will be) saying, 'Oh my, this could be me,'" LaRussa said.



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November 19, 2001

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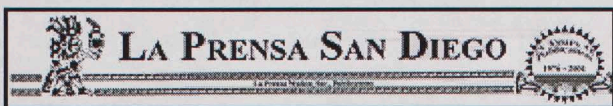
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Cc. Mr. Gene Bell, SD Union President, CEO, Ms. Karen Winner, Editor
Mr. James O. Goldsborough, SD Union Columnist, Ms. Gina Lubrano, Readers Representative



December 14, 2001

Tezezomoc Speaks

El Jefe dice no politics until **El Nuevo Año!** Pero some of this stuff is too good to wait till then. Let me lite up mi Pipa & smoke a little Mota....

La Gente started receiving Xmas cards from an **SDSU** employee named **Denise Ducheney**. Shows this Half-gringa half Hispunnnnnic standing in front of the Tijuana Estuary. **Horale Homies** what has the estuary and Xmas have to do with anything? Unless it has to do that the estuary carries all the **CACA from Tijuas** and **Xmas never ages...Same-o -Same-o with the wanna-be candidate Denise . . .**

PREGUNTA: Now that **Denise Ducheney** is running fulltime for political office, is she still getting a fulltime paycheck from **SDSU?????** They do have the custumbre of backing losers.

Superintendent Ed Brand and his Board of Yo-Yos stuck it to the majority of the student body (Mostly **RAZA**). Out of the thousands upon thousands, upon thousands of **CHICANO STUDENTS** who have attended the Sweetwater School system, these want-to-be Gringos (Board of Education) couldn't find one single Chicano or Chicana to include in their new **HALL OF FAME!** Not a single one was worthy of inclusion! Que insulto para nuestra Gente. El Jefe mighty caliente over this slam.

Sweetwater Union High School District will install its first alumni hall of famers tonight (Friday Dec. 14). Este Indio will not be there.

Who is the **SNAKE** that cut the head off a dead rat and put it on the door step of **Mayor Shirley Horton?** Shades of **La Mafia**. La Chota de Chula Vista is investigating. Cats cleanly slice the heads off rats before the eat them, human snakes don't.

Susan Davis (d) cast the decisive vote on giving President Bush **Fast Track Authority SE VENDIO!** (Anti-Mexican American, anti labor, anti-environment, anti-women). **DAVIS MIGHT AS WELL PUT A GUN TO OUR HEADS.** What is a small (d) democrat? That's easy: A democrat who cares less about the working class people, who only cares about herself and the next election. It usually signals a politico who is about to become a republican. Davis eager to recast herself as a ultra



Sweetwater Union High School District

Congratulations to the 17 Sweetwater Union High School District graduates who have been selected as the inaugural members of the district's Alumni Hall of Fame. The graduates shown here will be formally inducted during a gala dinner celebration tonight at 7:15 p.m. in the Constellation Ballroom at Loews Coronado Resort. The first inductees were chosen from the areas of academia, athletics, business, community service, military service, public service and visual and performing arts.

Sweetwater High

LEONARD VILLARREAL



Whether on the stage or in front of his peers at Sweetwater High, Leonard Villarreal has always been comfortable before an audience. And it's no surprise that SuHi's senior class president professed his ambition "to pursue a career in radio and television" in the 1969 yearbook.

A graduate of San Diego State University and now at KGTV-10, Villarreal realized that dream with uncommon success. He brings a true sense of community spirit to the news, and this weekend anchor isn't satisfied just reporting a story. After presenting the facts, he goes on to look for solutions.

Taking these extra steps during his more than 20-year career has earned Villarreal three Emmys and two Golden Mike Awards.

A firm believer in community-based journalism, Villarreal doesn't miss an opportunity to highlight San Diego youth. As spokesman of the 10Leadership Award, he has honored more than 400 local leaders for improving young people's lives.



GAIL DEVERS



Hours and hours spent running around the Sweetwater High stadium—now named in her honor—helped give Gail Devers the training and perseverance to set Olympic records.

Devers carried her success to UCLA where she earned a bachelor's degree in sociology while still following her passion for racing. She excelled in 100-meter dash and 100-meter hurdles, and in her senior year set an American record in the 100-meter hurdles.

Her athletic triumphs did not come without challenges. While training for the 1988 Olympics, Devers learned she had Graves' disease, a debilitating chronic thyroid disorder.

Her doctors feared they might have to amputate her feet.

But Devers pressed on, and 17 months after the diagnosis, she won her first gold medal—for the 100-meter dash—in the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. Four years later, Devers became only the second woman to win gold medals in the 100-meter dash in two consecutive Olympics. She also struck gold as a member of the 100-meter relay team.



ROBERT "BOB" CARLTON WILSON



Robert Carlton Wilson was elected Sweetwater High's first student body president in 1932—an early predictor of the distinguished political career to follow.

After studies at San Diego State College, Wilson partnered in two advertising agencies. His work in the U.S. Congress, however, made the greatest impact on San Diego. During the time Wilson represented the South Bay—1953 to 1981—he shaped the post-war economy and physically changed the region as well. His accomplishments include constructing Harbor Island, establishing the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Balboa Park and expanding park land around Mission Bay.

He was an influential member of the House Armed Services Committee, and his leadership resulted in General Dynamic's development of the Atlas Missile Project, Navy facilities at Ballast Point and a deeper San Diego Harbor to accommodate aircraft carriers.

Before his death in 1999, he published "Confessions of a Kinetic Congressman."



JESS E. VAN DEVENTER



Machine shop class was the springboard for Jess E. Van Deventer's success in auto racing and business. As a drag racer, he held national speed and elapsed time records and won the national Class Championship in B-modified Roadsters three consecutive years. His achievements earned him the National Hot Rod Association's Lifetime Achievement Award in 1999.

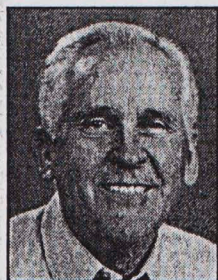
A successful entrepreneur who owned and operated a chain of auto parts stores and machine shops, Van Deventer later went into the construction business.

As a Commissioner of the San Diego Unified Port District and representative to the San Diego Association of Governments, he has helped San Diego emerge as a primary gateway for international commerce.

The lifetime National City resident has also served as city councilman and with the National City Redevelopment Agency.



L. ROBERT PAYNE



Reflecting on memorable times at Sweetwater High, Robert Payne speaks of serving as senior class president, playing on the varsity basketball team and participating in the various club activities. He credits English teacher Louise Howe with an extra nudge to go to college.

Today, Payne is President and Chief Executive Officer of Multi-Ventures, Inc., a real estate investment and management company, whose properties include the San Diego Mission Valley Hilton and Red Lion Hanalei Hotels. He serves on the board of Jack-in-the-Box and is past Board Chairman of Grossmont Bank.

Honored for his extensive community involvement, Payne says, "There's a responsibility that comes with success, and that's the payback." His service on the boards of numerous community organizations reflects his passions—youth, education, medicine and sports. Payne generously gives to Sweetwater through college scholarships for business majors and direct support of the school's marketing and management program.



CORKY MCMILLIN



From a start at the working end of a hammer at the age of 15—while still in school—Corky McMillin immersed himself in all phases of the construction business under the supervision of his father, a small building contractor.

In business circles today, he's Corky McMillin, a pillar of the community as founder of San Diego's oldest home-building operation, the county's largest independent real estate brokerage and second-largest commercial development company.

McMillin has also made a name for himself in off-road racing circles, drawing upon the great times in his youth when he raced hot rods around the hills of South County. He's a champion racer and overall winner of both the Baja 1000 and Baja 500.

Corky and his wife Vonnie have three children and eight grandchildren.



MAJ GEN KENNETH "SKIP" BURNS, USAF (RET)



In the first-ever football game between Sweetwater and Chula Vista, Kenneth "Skip" Burns scored three of the four touchdowns to lead the Red Devils to victory. That personal success has followed the 1948 graduate through a distinguished military career as a highly decorated combat fighter pilot and personal envoy to the Middle East for President Ronald Reagan.

A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Burns rose to the rank of Major General in the Air Force. President Reagan appointed Burns Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs for the Near East and Southeast Asia.

Burns—a test and combat fighter pilot—earned the Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Legion of Merit, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Bronze Star and the Airman's Medal for Heroism.

Upon retiring in 1985, Burns became a consultant to major defense and engineering firms, both domestic and abroad.



HARLAN SKINNER



Telling generations of Sweetwater District students and band directors about the time he performed for John Philip Sousa helped Harlan Skinner bring musical history to life. South Bay's "Music Man" began the Sweetwater District orchestra—now more than 500 students strong. Skinner's philosophy that every student should have access to the fine arts built the district into a nationally acclaimed musical powerhouse.

It was his passion for music that led Skinner and two others to create the Maytime Band Review in 1948. Since that time, the annual band competition has

grown into the largest west of the Mississippi. To honor Skinner's musical legacy, Sweetwater District band directors have commissioned a local composer to write the "Harlan Skinner March" to be played each year at the competition.

In October, Mr. Skinner passed away in the Chula Vista adobe brick home he built. He is survived by his wife Kathryn, three adult children, nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.



Bonita Vista High

MICHAEL J. ELLIS



Every day that Michael Ellis drives down the freeway, he thinks about Bonita Vista math teacher John McGowan's concept of new freeway delineators to make driving safer. "The thought that a little idea—when implemented—can change everything had a real impact on me."

That philosophy has served Ellis well, both personally and financially. He put into action the research for an herbal supplement to help improve his father Joseph's quality of life after he was diagnosed with terminal bone cancer. The resulting formula is known today as Metabolife 356, the nation's top-selling herbal dietary supplement.

The success of his company has allowed Ellis to give back to his community. Through the Metabolife Foundation, Ellis has contributed generously to St. Jude's Children's Hospital and the Make-A-Wish Foundation.



Readers write

Mexican-Americans ignored

Regarding the Sweetwater Union High School District's 16 inductees into the district's hall of fame "to help inspire students":

It is unbelievable, truly unbelievable (but not surprising) that in the year 2001 the board of trustees (three of five of whom are supposedly of Mexican ancestry) and Superintendent Ed Brand could not establish a process to find one individual (since 1922) from the Mexican-American community to be inducted into their so-called "Hall of Fame."

This in a district where the majority of taxpayers, parents and students are of Mexican ancestry.

Whatever the district's reasons, whether a bad process, oversight, ignorance, monetary (buttering up individuals who donated hundreds of thousands of dollars), or just "good old boy" business as usual, the exclusion of the Mexican-American community can only be labeled as another arrogant put-down, slap in the face and gross insult, by the board of trustees and Brand.

Even more incredible is the fact that from the top of my head I can easily name numerous politicians (governor, city council persons, trustees, etc.), judges, lawyers, sports figures, singers and other distinguished alumni of Mexican ancestry whom you excluded; who could have been selected.

What is even worse is the fact that by excluding hundreds of distinguished, accomplished Mexican-American alumni, the district has done a great disservice to the majority of Mexican-American students, a population which suffers from a massive dropout rate, low scores and numerous educational ills.

I am certain this population would have benefited and might have even been "inspired" by Mexican-American role models who look like them and probably share similar experiences.

Ironically, if the district's intent was to establish the hall of fame to "help inspire students," its decision to exclude now guarantees the exact opposite.

In fact, one can fairly assume that Mexican-American students will not be "inspired" or will ever state, "Oh my, this could be me."

Whatever the reasons, shame, shame, shame on the board of trustees and Brand — who are responsible for the process of excluding distinguished Mexican-American alumni — for denying Mex-

Letters policy

It is *The Star-News* policy to consider for publication only letters that are signed and include a daytime telephone number. Letters may be addressed: Editor, *The Star-News*, 321 E. St., Chula Vista, CA 91910; faxed to (619) 426-6346 or emailed to editor@cvhsa.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

ican-American students an opportunity, and for devaluing the honor for the 16 recipients who were chosen.

Herman Baca
Committee on Chicano Rights
National City

A tribute to Rep. Bob Filner's work

Sixty-five families in the South Bay and nearly 400 families across the country should think of Rep. Bob Filner and his staff when they receive a paycheck this week.

Corrosion Engineering Services Inc. (CES), headquartered in San Diego, provides preservation teams that perform pierside corrosion control services for U.S. Navy ships in San Diego and around the world. The preservation teams use advanced materials and techniques to repair and prevent corrosion on U.S. Navy ships eliminating much of the day-to-day "chipping and painting" normally done by sailors. Preservation teams prevent costly depot-level repairs caused by advanced corrosion and return thousands of hours back to sailors for warfighting, training, warfare qualification and professional development.

CES' successful partnering with the Navy for this effort has created over 200 jobs in the last two years, 65 of them in the 50th Congressional District. Administrative challenges surrounding contracts and government funding lines threatened the suspension of these ongoing maintenance efforts for the U.S. Navy as well as layoffs that would have impacted nearly 400 contract personnel, including 65 Chula Vista and South San Diego families.

At the end of each fiscal year, many maintenance efforts need to be "restarted" with "new year" funding. Delays in budget authorizations and the contract document processing often translate into temporary layoffs for government support contractors. The tremendous volume of new efforts that need to be reviewed, authorized and distrib-

uted before work can start can take several weeks or months to complete.

In this instance, after learning of the issues at stake, Bob Filner contacted Navy representatives that reviewed alternatives to keep these programs in place and our personnel at work. Open discussion between personnel at Naval Sea Systems Command in Washington and the Fleet Industrial Supply Center in San Diego produced a combination of solutions that ensured that preservation team work efforts will continue without interruption. These solutions impact several companies and workers at 11 locations across the country. In addition to the civilian jobs saved, these solutions allow for the continuation of other key programs that reduce corrosion control workload for shipboard sailors.

I wish to publicly and personally thank Rep. Filner on behalf of each of the 65 South Bay families he has helped. There will be jobs tomorrow because he cared enough to champion their interests.

William Hall
CES Inc.
Chula Vista

Don't let council deceive you again

This ordinary citizen votes no on the proposed \$6 million Library Bond Act. Sympathies to Anne Campbell, our city librarian, I have a long memory.

My family has used the city library since 1952 and has been well satisfied. The well-maintained facility is large enough for other users such as the educational classes on the lower floor. As a small self-contained city, the present library is ample and located in Kimball Park on a quiet street. That is reason enough. However, there is the misguided judgment of two backers of the bond, Councilmembers Ron Morrison and Mitch Beauchamp, regarding the Q Avenue Paseo Del Sol homes. Their
See LETTERS page 7

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11-16-01