

## **HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD**

### **REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES, PARKS NAMING COMMITTEE**

In response to a request made by Mr. David Dominguez of Community Services to provide suggestions for use by the Parks Naming Committee, the Historic Resources Board has prepared the attached report.

There are three sections:

- 1- Introduction and Summation
- 2- Criteria Used
- 3- Background and Justification for Selected Candidates
- 4- Specific Comments Relative to Arevalos, Wardlow and "Lamb" Parks

## **INTRODUCTION AND SUMMATION**

The members of the Historic Resources Board are pleased to have been asked to suggest candidates for potential use by the Parks Naming Committee and hope this report may prove useful.

As noted in the following explanation of criteria used to derive these suggestions, Huntington Beach is blessed to have been home to many exemplary individuals. Omissions are the inevitable by-product of the human mind and the limits of time in which to prepare this type of report and no name was purposefully left off. If further information is sought regarding individuals whose names were not included, the HRB will be happy to provide whatever additional research may be deemed useful.

### **Recommended Candidates**

Short biographies and supporting documentation are attached when not otherwise provided elsewhere.

Delbert G. “Bud” Higgins – Mr. Higgins is at the top of this candidate list. The HRB recommends, in the strongest possible terms, that his name be given to a park. In fact, we would earnestly urge consideration that the new beach front park be named in his honor.

William H. Gallienne – Secretary Manager of the Chamber of Commerce, Community Leader

Celia Ward Young Baker – WWII veteran, First Female Huntington Beach Municipal Judge, Respected Jurist

Frank Ciarelli – educator and coach.

### **Additional Recommendations**

There are many exemplary individuals associated with our past who have left lasting legacies. It would be impossible to name parks after them all. The HRB would encourage the PNC or other responsible body to consider naming other structures or locations for some of them, many of whom are clearly connected with a specific such location.

## Park Naming Criteria

Parks may be named for events, such as Discovery Well Park, distinguishing features such as Lake Park, physical locations such as Bluff Top Park, or even shape such as the former Circle Park.

In evaluating potential park naming suggestions, the Historic Resources Board has made no recommendations for these kinds of designations believing that any such names will emerge with the fullness of time as new park sites are identified. Instead, the HRB has focused on identifying individuals who might be good candidates for memorialization through park naming.

Recognizing the many citizens of Huntington Beach who have distinguished themselves, made exemplary contributions to the community or are otherwise note-worthy, the HRB first attempted to outline criteria for these suggestions.

First, given the number of outstanding individuals who have resided here, the HRB considered only those whose contributions or experiences either augmented city life or represented it in some noteworthy way. Thus, individuals of incredible stature may be omitted if their experiences were outside of Huntington Beach.

Second, the issue of “uniqueness” or “sameness” was considered. “Sameness” is defined as having an attribute that by definition may qualify someone for this recognition such as the current policy of naming parks for former mayors. However, it also encompasses the important characteristic of representation of a broader highly significant group. For instance, ethnicity or periodicity could be factors. “Uniqueness” refers to an individual’s singular importance as a contributor to the community or for some individual achievement. “Uniqueness” also includes consideration of potentially underrepresented minorities, such as those based on race or gender.

In considering a unique candidate, their experience, contribution or organization should constitute and demonstrate a lasting legacy. The specific institution or event may no longer exist, but the heritage of their actions should be identifiable.

The notion of whether the candidate’s family remained in the area was briefly considered as a criterion. It was discarded because memorialization stems from an individual’s achievements and is independent of family then or now.

## Delbert G. Higgins

Delbert G. “Bud” Higgins was an iconic figure who served the City in numerous important ways throughout his life. Born in 1907, “Bud” Higgins’ family moved to Huntington Beach in 1909, the year the City was born and, in many ways, he and it grew up together. He held various important positions, created practices and protocols that shaped his field, was repeatedly heralded as a hero, documented the city’s past, and through his own boosterism, and his seminal contributions to surf culture, was a critical figure in establishing our community’s identity as “Surf City.” His legacy is immense and enduring.

He attended elementary and high school here. Although he loved all sports, he particularly developed a life-long passion for the ocean. While completing high school, he began working as a part time life guard. He continued in that position after joining the Southern California Edison Co. and continued at jobs both until 1932.

During these years, he and his good friend Gene Belshe “discovered” the sport of surfing when they met Duke Kahanamoku and several other Hawaiians who were making a movie in Corona del Mar. At Higgins’ invitation, they came to try out the waves in Huntington Beach. Using their advice, Bud and Gene constructed their own surfboards in 1927. Made of “kiln dried redwood”, they were cumbersome specimens 10 feet long. Higgins recalled: “We were both lifeguards during the daytime so many of the local boys learned to ride these two boards.” They became so waterlogged with use, they had to be dried in a towel room and new coats of varnish were added continually. Other boards of various construction were subsequently made and by 1930, enough surf boards existed in the area that Newport Beach hosted a surfing contest. Huntington Beach hosted the next one in 1933. Clearly, the early interest of Bud and Gene in the sport of surfing and the building of their early boards was foundational to the continuing development of surfing in our city and ultimately its identity as “Surf City”.

In 1933, Bud was named the first fulltime Lifeguard Chief, a position he held for 19 years. During that time, he developed the department itself – working to deploy lifeguards strategically, encourage skill development and refine rescue practices with significant success. Although he would have never have called himself a hero, he and his team performed countless services to the injured while risking their own personal safety.

A particular example was documented in news accounts of July, 1943. When the pilot of a P-38 aircraft flying along the coast ejected from his burning plane, it crashed onto the beach. The ensuing scene was horrific as “the beach throng turned into a frenzied mob as screaming women sought to beat out with their hands, blazing bathing suits of children sprayed with

burning fuel.” Police Chief Blossom remembered the near immediate arrival of Higgins followed by Army ambulances and others. Higgin’s team immediately set about offering aid to the injured. As attention turned to recovering the wreckage, “Life Guard Chief Bud Higgins dived into the surf time after time and attached heavy tow lines to bits of landing gear blown 100 yards from the point of impact.”

The newspapers frequently carried reports on the activities of Higgins’ lifeguards as Huntington Beach hosted increasing numbers of visitors. The number of people and the nature of their injuries and “narrow escapes” made interesting reading as swimmers good and bad were plucked from riptides or even calm waves. It was with a heavy heart that Higgins reported in August 1947 that the William L. Cain of Whittier had drowned. Higgins used the experience to analyze and strengthen lifesaving practices. It is a noteworthy credit to him and his team that it was the first drowning since 1938.

Bud’s enthusiasm for the city and its coast was infectious. He taught others to swim and encouraged competition in aquatic circles. In 1947, for instance, he assembled an “array of ace swimmers” for the Southern California Lifeguard Championship. He declared “Every crew on the coast is loaded for this event...And we’ve got the cream.” Held at the Los Angeles Olympic swimming stadium before an enormous audience, the Huntington Beach team entered every event and brought home the title. Higgins was later shown displaying the impressive trophy to a local bathing beauty.

His most famous piece of showmanship – and one which clearly garnered attention for the city – occurred during the Huntington Beach July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations each year. Throngs of visitors would crowd the beach to watch a flaming man leap from into the sea. It was Higgins performing his signature stunt clad in fireproof suit doused in alcohol, his face protected by petroleum jelly. Once alight, he jumped from a platform 50’ above the pier into the ocean below.

For much of those years, Higgins had served as a member of the volunteer fire department. In 1952, he was named the city’s fire chief. As he had done as Lifeguard Chief, he worked to strengthen the department which was already well established by this time as well as to encourage public awareness of fire safety. He supported the city in this capacity until his retirement in 1967.

Almost immediately, Higgins was appointed City Historian. It was a fitting assignment for a man who had experienced first-hand the growth and story of the community. Bill Reed, Public Information Officer, later noted that Higgins was “the authority on Huntington Beach.” Mayor Ted Bartlett concurred. As City Historian, Higgins gathered information and commented on

numerous aspects of our city's past. He authored a valuable history of surfing which is regularly cited today and even wrote of the provenance of a city piano.

When Delbert Higgins died in 1982, he left an unparalleled legacy of service. He is remembered by many, and is survived here by family members. Even those who never knew him enjoy the fruits of his many labors. Without Delbert G. "Bud" Higgins, "Surf City" would not be what it is today.

## William H. Gallienne

William H. Gallienne, a native of the Island of Guernsey, devoted most of his professional life to the City of Huntington Beach. This outstanding service, coupled with his personal involvement in many aspects of community life, underscore his importance to the developing history of Huntington Beach.

Following his death in 1965, Mayor Donald Shipley declared "No resident more than Bill typified and was a part of the life of the city of Huntington Beach. His energy and dedication to duty was exemplary." Shipley particularly noted Gallienne's role in both the Fourth of July and Christmas parades, both of which have long remained cherished events in this community.

Gallienne arrived with his parents in Huntington Beach at the age of 15 in 1910 when the city was only a year old. He remained here for the rest of his life. His early jobs included a stint at Eader's Bakery (a pioneer family for whom a school and a park are now named) and, like so many others, employment at Standard Oil. Later, he owned a gas station on the corner of Main Street and Olive Avenue.

His extensive professional contributions were made during his important 30 year tenure as Secretary-Manger of the Huntington Beach Chamber of Commerce. His unwavering commitment to the business community and the broader city were repeatedly demonstrated throughout those years. In 1943, he was elected Vice President of the Western Institute of Commercial Trade Executives. Representing trade executives from eleven western states, the federal government increasingly relied on chambers in these areas for various support activities during war time. Clearly, this appointment reflected well on Gallienne, but also on Huntington Beach and the reliable stability of its business community. Ultimately, he became president of the California Chamber of Commerce Managers, a member of the Orange County Fair Board, secretary of the Orange County Coast Association and secretary of the local unit of the Urban Land Institute.

Gallienne was known for his role in many Huntington Beach events, including his "Twin-O-Rama Contest" which was held for several years and brought participants from throughout the region. Gallienne's most enduring legacy lies in his important role in developing and perpetuating the now famous Fourth of July celebrations and later, the city's Christmas parade as well. Dubbed "El Generalissimo" for his leadership and organization of these events, Mayor Shipley observed:" The city's Fourth of July and Christmas parades were an inspired part of his life and the life of this city."

Gallienne was also active in the community life of Huntington Beach. He was a talented trumpet player who often appeared as a soloist with the Huntington Beach Municipal Band. He proudly led the Choir of the First Christian Church. He regularly performed in musical productions throughout Orange County and was nicknamed "Impressario" as a member of the county's Choral Society for his lovely tenor voice.

He also enjoyed his long membership in the local Elks Lodge.

His lifetime of service clearly renders William H. Gallienne as worthy of remembrance. As Mayor Shipley observed: "He will be greatly missed and long remembered because many of the things he did have and will become a part of the life of this city."

## Celia W. Young Baker

Celia W. Young Baker came to Huntington Beach with her family as part of the great wave of post-war migrants to the area – both she and her husband were veterans. As such, she and her family are representative of this group and of this time. However, she is personally very significant for her role and contributions as the first female judge of the Huntington Beach City Court. Subsequently, she became the only female Municipal Judge in Orange County when she was elected to that office covering the then newly formed West Orange County Judicial District.

New York native Celia W. Young Baker attended the University of Buffalo, studied law for a time at George Washington University and worked briefly for a New York legal firm. She joined the Navy in 1943 as a WAVE (Women Accepted for Volunteer Service) where she met and married her first husband, Ferry Command Pilot Carl F. Young. Following the war, daughters Carol and Linda were born. Carl was transferred to Long Beach and the family moved west.

In 1946, Carl and Celia Young purchased their first property in Huntington Beach – Lots Six and Seven of Tract No. 1156. Though they later purchased sundry interests in other properties, she and her husband Carl, by this time a contractor, built their personal residence here at 628 Hartford and moved in immediately.

Only a year later in 1947, Celia who had never actually completed formal legal training, took and remarkably passed the California Bar Exam and set up private practice from her Hartford Street home in Huntington Beach. In 1948, her office moved to a courtroom in City Hall when she was unanimously elected by the city council to fill the unexpired term of the late Judge Charles P. Patton. She was first female judge of the Huntington Beach City Court. She was elected the only female judge for the Western Orange County Municipal Court when that jurisdiction was created in 1953. Two years later, her first husband passed away leaving her a single mother as well as a respected jurist. She subsequently married George Baker moving away from the Hartford Street house, but never moving away from Huntington Beach where, as a veteran, she remained a proud member of the American Legion Post 133.

During her remarkable career, Celia W. Young Baker served in various volunteer capacities and was invited to speak on numerous legal panels. Known as fair and thorough, she presided over countless trials from murder, assault, arson and wiretapping to molestation and domestic abuse. Willing to accept change and to look for new ways of encouraging responsible behavior, she was one of the first judges to embrace the notion of “traffic school” especially for juvenile offenders. One of her more humorous cases which captured the public eye involved a dog named Shelty, who was accused of violating a Seal Beach ordinance forbidding dogs from barking. His defense argued unconstitutionality. Celia Young Baker agreed while Shelty supposedly barked a delighted “Woof!” in response.

Celia Young Baker retired from the bench on November 8, 1972 purposely timing her departure with an upcoming election which allowed the people, rather than the Governor, to select her successor. Somewhat surprisingly, she did not consider herself a judicial path-maker by virtue of her sex or even as having been treated differently as a result of it. The only time she recognized it as an issue occurred years earlier when a potential client expecting C.W. Young to be a man he hoped would handle his divorce, stalked out declaring "I've had enough of women!" Still, she must have had something of an uphill battle as a female judge during all her years of dispensing justice. When her departure left newly appointed judge Betty Lou Lamoreaux, also of Huntington Beach, as the only woman judge in Orange County, the local newspaper documented Lamoreaux's swearing in ceremony in an article entitled "Skirts Beneath Black Robe...New Judge for Orange County" devoting the first paragraph to her "becoming eye shadow and lipstick", "striking earrings", and "auburn hair that can be brushed into several styles."

When she passed away in 1993, her funeral services were held at the Church of Religious Science on Main Street in Huntington Beach. Noted former Mayor Norma B. Gibbs presided over her memorial. Clearly, Celia W. Young Baker was - actually and comparatively - a true Huntington Beach pioneer.

## **SPECIFIC COMMENTS RELATIVE TO AREVALOS, WARDLOW AND “LAMB” PARK**

In the Parks and Recreation Master Plan of 2016, the benefits of parks and recreation as specified by the California Park and Recreation Society were listed. Among these were “increase cultural unity” and “strengthen community image and sense of place.” (p.19)

In keeping with these statements, the HRB would encourage the renaming of parks only when there is a clear and significant reason for doing so. However obsolete these names may be, they are the names by which these parks are known by members of the communities surrounding them. Changing these names could be seen as counter-productive to strengthening community image and sense of place. Currently, the names of three such sites are being considered by decision-makers. One of these could also be seen to reflect cultural unity.

### **AREVALOS PARK**

The story of Arevalos Park and the man for which it was named have been well documented by city staff. It appears as the example for the neighborhood park type in the P & R Master Plan (p.32). Mr. Arevalos was a humble man whose home was technically in Fountain Valley although he maintained a very modest plot of farmland across the municipal borderline in Huntington Beach. Under discussion is the idea that he was a Fountain Valley pioneer, not associated with Huntington Beach. Interestingly, a 1948 news article about a Fountain Valley Pioneer Families picnic (held at our own Lake Park) included the names of numerous worthy notables, sadly not one of which was Latina/o and did not include the Arevalos.

It was not until this park was named that recognition was given to this family and through them to the many others of their time and place who contributed to the development of both Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach. Mr. Arevalos is known to have lived and worked in both cities. Many other such families have done so as well. In fact, the censuses of Huntington Beach from 1910 through 1940 show those families with Latina/o surnames increasingly moved away from the beach and the city’s Main Street core and toward Fountain Valley. Despite a few “pockets”, this community increasingly blended into one without regard for any invisible borderline between the cities. Mr. Arevalos is representative of this entire community.

Local historian and assistant county archivist, Chris Jepsen, has written in favor of name retention. Southland journalist, Gustavo Arellano has done so as well. Public response has been very supportive of retaining the name. The HRB respectfully suggests that no name change be considered for Arevalos Park at this time.

## **WARDLOW PARK**

The biography of the man for which this park is named has been well documented by city staff. Of Arevalos, Lamb and Wardlow, Wardlow appears the individual most closely and exclusively associated with Fountain Valley. However, recognizing that this is the name the surrounding community recognizes for this park, the HRB respectfully suggests that it be changed only if some more compelling reason for doing so emerges.

## **“LAMB” PARK**

Other than community recognition of this piece land colloquially named “Lamb Park”, this is not a named park nor is it even designated as a park site. Community recognition is an important aspect with former students of the now long defunct and demolished Lamb Elementary School maintaining a social media presence. As with Arevalos Park, material documenting Mr. Lamb’s association with Huntington Beach has been prepared by city staff. It has been supplemented by material prepared by Chris Jepsen and submitted to the Parks Naming Committee. While the HRB urges consideration of community identification with the name, it does seem the most amenable to a “name change” given its lack of designation.