

CORPUS CHRISTI | AWARDS



Ray Madrigal | Former DMC Student

Former labor leader Mike Zepeda, who dies in 2003 and is shown here accepting an award, was honored many times during his life. Now, the City Council has renamed a southside park in his honor in recognition of his battles for civil rights in the city.

Zepeda honored by city council

By Edwin Vasquez
FOGHORN

The Corpus Christi City Council took the first step toward honoring long-time local civil rights activist Mike Zepeda by passing a motion to name a city park in his honor, Jan. 31.

Zepeda, who died in October 2003, was one of the plaintiffs who in 1968 sued to desegregate Corpus Christi Independent School District (CCISD). The case led to the identification of Mexican-Americans as members of a distinct minority and had nationwide impact when it was settled in 1970.

The park — currently named Southside Park — is located at 3010 Sunnybrook St.

The Corpus Christi Barrios Association (CCBA) presented the petition to the city council. Retired Lt. Commander Juan Garcia III made the presentation on behalf of CCBA.

Garcia praised Zepeda for his community activism and said this his action as a one of the plaintiffs in "Cisneros vs. CCISD" changed the face of school system in Corpus Christi and the nation.

"This is one of the first cases in the U.S. that identified Mexican-Americans as members of a distinct ethnic minority group victimized by discrimination," Garcia said.

"The case brought national attention to desegregate Mexican-Americans and Hispanics in school systems," Garcia,

said. City council member John Marez also praised Zepeda.

"He was very active in the Corpus Christi community and this is type of legacy we need to be honoring," Marez, who represents District 2, said.

Jerry Garcia, Jr., at-large city council member, added, "I never met Mr. Zepeda. However, I hear many compliments and good feed back about Mike Zepeda, so I am very happy to hear from the community wants to honor him by naming this park for him," Garcia said.

Mayor Henry Garrett praised Zepeda for his work with labor unions and battle for equity in education.

"Zepeda was always battling for labor issues and educational issues and it's a great honor to rename this park in his name," Garrett said.

Zepeda, in an interview with Chicano viewpoints in 2001, said this was a country "where dogs have more rights" than a Mexican-American.

"I fight because I still remember growing up, seeing the 'No Dogs or Mexicans' signs," Zepeda said in 2001. "The other day, someone received three years for killing a dog. Here, you can kill a Mexican and get away with it."

Lisa Ann Torres, vice president of CCBA said "the renaming of the park was my idea, since I am currently the Democratic Party chairperson."

Sylvia Samaniego, CCBA president, also said Zepeda's action impacted the

current city council format.

"Zepeda also sued City of Corpus Christi for equal representation on the city council and helped changed format from all at-large representation to the current mixed at-large and district seating," Samaniego said.

Zepeda, served in the United Armed forces from 1942-1945, assisted in the liberation of the Philippine Islands, and was honorably discharged.

He worked for Reynolds Metal from 1951 until his retirement.

Zepeda was a member of the United Steelworkers of America and served in several leadership positions, including president of the local chapter 4813.

He also served as a trustee and vice president of the Coastal Bend Labor Council and past member of the League of United Latin American citizens, was active with the American G.I. Forum and served on advisory committee for CCISD for 29 years.

"Next year Mike Zepeda will be inducted into the American Federation of labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) Hall of Fame," Lisa Torres, vice president of CCBA, said.

"He truly deserves to be honored."

"Mike Zepeda Park" will be dedicated in an official ceremony later this year.

In the meantime, the CCBA will make improvement to the park area.

PROFILE | SGA-EAST PRESIDENT

New SGA president has varied experiences

By Bryan Thetford
Del Mar College

Joseph Ramirez, a criminal justice and death investigations major, witnessed his first autopsy this week and opted not to wear a mask.

Ramirez, new president of the Student Government Association-East Campus, brings his own style and passion to everything he does and is involved with.

"I wanted to make sure I got into a field I am comfortable in, nothing bothered me," Ramirez said. That kind of nerve should serve him well, because Ramirez definitely has his hands full this semester.

In addition to being the new President of the SGA-East, a full-time student, and a single father of two, he is also a member of the DMC Catholic Club, and the President of the DMC Ambassadors.

Ramirez, however, did not take office unprepared. Before coming to Del Mar he was the assistant administrator of the Nueces County Democratic party, helping run the county and state elections. He is no stranger to student government either. In his fourth semester with the SGA he has served as parliamentarian, vice president, and interim president.

He has worked diligently with the parking committee to find a solution to one of Del Mar's biggest issues. While the city was unable to lower the speed limit on Baldwin or Ayers or add more speed bumps or blinking traffic lights, the committee was successful in having the lights on Staples reconfigured to make the intersection safer for pedestrian crossing, he said. There is also a possibility that another crosswalk will be added at the intersection of Edwards and Ayers, near the Multi-Service Center. Ultimately, Ramirez would like to see the addition of a parking garage, stating that the campus will be unable to spread out in either direction, leaving nowhere to go but up.

Two semesters ago, Ramirez noticed the poor eating habits of his fellow students and feared it might have something to do with the rise in tuition. So he started a Food Court Committee and pushed for the 99-cent menu that we enjoy today, he claimed.

"As president, I hope to bring more stability, provide for the student body and work on whatever the SGA decides to improve," Ramirez said.

He said he hopes to help SGA reach its goals this year. Among SGA goals are extended library hours and a book swap program that would allow students to trade books among themselves rather than buying from and selling to a bookstore.

"I bring many years of former leadership, experience and knowledge, and the will to better Del Mar for present and future students," he said.



File Photo | FOGHORN

Ramirez initiates the discussion to lower speedlimits along the streets around Del Mar College. Even though the idea was declined, Ramirez still brings ideas to the table for the SGA.

EDUCATION | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Robstown, paid a higher out-of-pocket tuition fee, but in comparison to the overall tuition paid by in-district students and the district property taxes, their total tuition did not come close.

Students who lived inside of the district were paying around \$500 out-of-pocket tuition for 12 credit hours which then was subsidized with another \$1,500 to cover the \$2,000 tuition that would normally be charged to attend Del Mar.

Students living outside of the district, where percentages of property taxes are not contributed to Del Mar, were paying around \$1,100.

The total tuition fees for out-of-district students, being less, led to the vote by Board of Regents back in August 2005 to increase their tuition drastically and equalize funds.

Del Mar Administration made the decision to implement the increase in spring instead of fall so that students would not feel the strain immediately.

In contrast to the decline in the out-of-district figures, the in-district numbers reflect a

boost from last year's report by 82 students.

The delay in executing the hike in tuition may have allowed some students to move within the district in order to minimize their costs, suggests Barbara Thompson, assistant director of admissions and registrars.

Although the cost of attending DMC has risen, Claudia Jackson, assistant to the president for community relations, believes receiving an education from the top-ranking community college surpasses price.

"For every credit hour earned at Del Mar, a student has made 10 times the investment in a career," claims Jackson. "We offer quality education for a better price. It is worth it."

Del Mar continues to expand the programs offered such as specialization in associate's degrees for teachers which will allow DMC graduates to immediately begin teaching certain subjects in middle school.

The West Campus continues its expansion construction, and the approval of a pharmacy technology program to launch in the fall provides evidence that the drop in enrollment is a temporary phase.



By Sandra Portillo
FOGHORN

ENTERTAINMENT | AFTER DARK

Nightlife in Corpus Christi becoming a big hit

If you are wondering what to do in Corpus this weekend, there are plenty of events coming up for your entertainment.

For one thing, there is drama at the theater. The Harbor Playhouse Theater will present "Cheaper by the Dozen," through Feb. 26. The story of a man's commitment and undying love for his 12 children as told through the eyes of his two middle children.

For more information go to www.harbor-playhouse.com.

But if you are looking for a fun night, you can consider going to the new club Carnaval which has a variety of different atmospheres and events coming up.

Carnaval will have Cielo 69 performed live on Thursday, Feb. 16, and BIG SEXY in En Fuego, on Feb. 23. On Friday, Feb. 17, Tejano

singer Joe Lopez will be the featured artist and on Feb. 24 Control will be in Club Arriba.

The action continues on Saturday, Feb. 25 with the \$300 Queen of the Mardi Gras Party/Gaberial Soto.

There are also contests and fun events at Carnaval every week. Among the promotions are "Totally Chick," "18 & Up Night," "Ladies Night" and the "\$500 Balloon Drop" on Thursday.

The promotions include "Happy hour Friday," and "The Groove Free Buffet" on Friday, "Dodge The Door" and the "\$200 Balloon Drop" on Saturday. Almost every weekend the club presents of "Adrelanina Live" from Monterrey at En Fuego. For more information go to www.grahamcentralstation.com and click in Locations, Corpus Christi.

With all these coming up you don't have an excuse of not having fun!