

## Staff Report

May 4, 2021

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Carrie Dyer, Administrative Analyst

**RE:** Human Relations Commission Minutes - April 22, 2021

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### **Recommendation**

1. Receive draft minutes from the Human Relations Commission meeting of April 22 as informational, with the exception of items of 6B and 6C. *Attachments 1 and 2*
  - a. Ratify the following nomination recommendations from the Human Relations Commission for the 2021 Thong Hy Huynh Awards. Awards will be presented at the May 18th City Council meeting.
    - Civil Rights Advocacy: Francesca Wright
    - Excellence in Community Involvement: Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter
    - Young Humanitarians: Valdy Nagassam and Xochitl Torres
    - Public Servant of the Year: Eva Dopico (Posthumous)
  - b. Accept the draft workplan of the Human Relations Commission for January 2021 – June 2022.

### **April 22 – Agenda Item 6B**

The Human Relations Commission annually seeks nominations for the Thong Hy Huynh (“*tong hi win*”) Awards. The awards are presented once each year in memory of the stabbing death of Davis High School student Thong Hy Huynh on May 4, 1983. The award was established to raise awareness about and to honor community members whose actions exemplify the goals of diversity, community, social justice and equal rights.

The awards will be presented by the City Council on May 18th. As per policy, staff brings the Commission recommendations to the City Council for review and ratification prior to issuing the awards. The Commission is recommending the following nominations to the City Council:

These excerpts are taken directly from the nominations.

#### **Civil Rights Advocacy: Francesca Wright**

*For the last five years, Francesca has been an unceasing, conscientious accomplice in bringing to light the circumstances of our communities most vulnerable populations, including people of color and the unhoused, and has succeeded in changing the tenor of discussions between community members and police around these issues. She has successfully advocated for the implementation of programs to better serve the most*

*vulnerable in Yolo County's criminal justice systems; I believe her tireless dedication to local social justice issues make her most deserving of this award*

**Excellence in Community Involvement: Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter**

*For the past thirteen years, during the coldest months, IRWS has provided both evening and morning meals, friendly conversation, and a warm place to sleep for up to 25 guests. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, congregate sleeping is no longer a healthy option so the IRWS model of emergency shelter can no longer operate. However, the benefits continue because the 1500+ volunteers have gotten to know some of our un-housed residents and often talk about how their perception of homelessness has changed. This large group of community volunteers--some from faith-based congregations, some from the UC Davis campus, some from the community at large—have pulled together as a team to make Davis a better place for all.*

**Young Humanitarian: Valdy Nagassam**

*Valdy Nagassam truly embodies the spirit of this award. I did not know how much power, persistence and passion he had until he shared an essay that he wrote during one of our weekly Black Student Union meetings. We were in the middle of a racially charged discussion on walking the halls while black and the use of the “n-word” on campus. Valdy's essay was read by Coach Brown which in turn shifted the conversation to a different perspective on the “n-word”. Since then, I have found myself relying on Valdy to bridge the different thought and feelings of the group into words and actions. Valdy has been the heart of the BSU. His spirit, compassion and determination will continue to float the halls of DHS long after he leaves. Making small steps towards change is easy, taking giant steps takes bravery and Valdy is leaping for change.*

**Young Humanitarian: Xochitl Torres**

*Xochitl has spoken out on behalf of Native American youth in Davis. She is strongly committed to bringing education about Native American issues and culture to the Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD) and community at large. She continues to advocate for Climate Action, protection of sacred sites, and the rights of Mother Earth.*

**Public Servant of the Year: Eva Dopico (Posthumous)**

*Eva Dopico's outstanding contributions in the City of Davis included serving families through the DPC, Whole Earth, and to the “Cesar Chavez Elementary School Day of the Dead Celebration” through the “Spanish Immersion Parents and Teachers” organization. She always contributed with meaningful and memorable “social justice messaging” and/or “multicultural activities” that were culturally affirming to hundreds of families and children in this community.*

*Eva advocated fearlessly against school bullying, especially LGBTQ and Native children. The mothers of those children have never forgotten this action of care and understanding as well as how she culturally affirmed these children – when other did not or could not. In addition, Dopico supported Ethnic Studies education including by providing public comments at the local school district and at the Capital because she understood the structural implications of culturally relevant education for students in the State of California.*

**April 22 – Agenda Item 6C**

The Human Relations Commission has updated their draft workplan (attachment 5) for January 2021 through June 2022, with an overall theme of facilitating and taking part in community conversation and focus areas to include:

1. Health and Public Safety Improvements
2. Outreach
3. Ensuring Equity Considerations of Local Sustainable Climate Action Plans  
Response to Social Impact of Current Social Issues

**Attachments:**

1. HRC minutes from April 22
2. Proposed workplan for January 2021 – June 2022