

STAFF REPORT

DATE: April 30, 2013
TO: City Council
FROM: Kelly Stachowicz, Deputy City Manager
SUBJECT: 2013 Thong Hy Huynh Award Nominations

Recommendation

1. Approve nomination recommendations from the Human Relations Commission for 2013 Thong Hy Huynh Awards. Awards will be presented at the May 21st City Council meeting.
2. Approve recommendation of commission to have a proclamation in recognition of the 30th anniversary of Thong Hy Huynh's death, to be read at the May 21st City Council meeting, using the draft attached.

Fiscal Impact

The cost of presenting the awards is included in the 2012-2013 budget, funded by the General Fund. Costs include engravings for the perpetual plaque, individual certificates for award winners and a small reception.

Background and Analysis

The purpose of the Human Relations Commission, which was established in 1983, is to develop positive human relations through greater education and understanding and to encourage and promote equal opportunity under the law.

The Commission annually seeks nominations for the Thong H. Huynh Awards. The awards are presented once each year in commemoration of the stabbing death of Davis High School student Thong H. Huynh on May 4, 1983. The award was established to honor community members whose actions exemplify the goals of diversity, community and equal rights.

The awards will be presented by the City Council on May 21. As per policy, staff recommends the Council approve the Commission's nominations prior to issuing the awards, as well as approve the proclamation drafted by the Commission to acknowledge the 30th anniversary of the death of Thong Hy Huynh. It is the Commission's recommendation to frame the proclamation and hang it with the perpetual plaque honoring the Huynh Award recipients.

This year's awards include the following categories: Lifetime Achievement, Young Humanitarian, Civil Rights Advocacy, Excellence in Community Involvement (for an organization), and Public Servant of the Year. The nomination form, which includes descriptions of each category, is included as Attachment 1.

The Commission is recommending the following nominations to the City Council:

Lifetime Achievement	Gay Powers
Young Humanitarian	Antonio DeLoera Brust
Young Humanitarian	Daniel Tutt
Civil Rights Advocacy	Diane Evans
Excellence in Community Involvement	Davis Odd Fellows Lodge
Excellence in Community Involvement	Davis Schools Orchestral Music Association (DSOMA) and the Robert and Yinnette Chang Family Trust Foundation
Public Servant of the Year	Tracie Olsen

Summaries of the nominations are included below. The Commission believes the recommendations are the best and most appropriate nominations in each category and asks the Council to ratify the nominations.

Lifetime Achievement: Gay Powers.

Gay Powers served on the HRC as a Commissioner and Chairwoman from 1991 to 1997. Noticing that the city lacked diverse celebrations and wanting to honor the person who was the champion of the Civil Rights Movement Gay worked with the commission and city council to plan and organize the first ever City of Davis Martin Luther King Day Celebration. Gay personally organized and oversaw all aspects of the event for the first four years of its existence. She then worked to establish the Martin Luther King Day Celebration as an annual celebration that to this day is acknowledged and celebrated in the City of Davis.

With a groundswell of support, Gay Powers was a key leader in the community that established the City of Davis Anti-Discrimination Ordinance in 1994. Gay also worked vigorously in support of the 1986 Davis Domestic Partners Ordinance which was ahead of its time in recognizing the City of Davis as a inclusive thinking community that believed in acknowledging domestic partners.

As a life-long civil rights activist, Gay also led the Commission’s work to oppose both Proposition 187 (California’s anti-immigration proposition) in 1994 and Proposition 209 (the Anti-affirmative action proposition) in 1996.

Young Humanitarian:

- **Daniel Tutt.** Daniel Tutt (18) has consistently focused his attention on addressing humanitarian concerns. He worked at the Madison Migrant Center, where he used his Spanish skills that he developed at Cesar Chavez Elementary and then at Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. High to teach kindergarten-age migrant children, math, to read, write, and speak English. Through his church he has travelled to New Orleans where he helped rebuild homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Recently, he has channeled his humanitarian work through the school Newspaper the HUB. In his first year on the HUB he served as news editor, covering events like the UCD pepper spray and subsequent arrest of protestors outside the Bank of America, the rise of unemployment in Davis, and the effects of lay-offs on DHS. Most notably, he partnered with last year’s Huynh award

recipient, Anna Sturla, to write and publish a series of three articles focusing on the Latino community in Davis, including one on the Davis migrant center and another which won the Robert F Kennedy award (the highest national award for high school journalism with one awarded every year) for his investigative story on how Latinos form their own soccer leagues in Davis because they cannot overcome cultural barriers.

- **Antonio DeLoera Brust.** Antonio worked at the Madison Migrant Center where he coordinated with high school student volunteers and taught English, reading, and math to the migrant children grades 1-5. He has spent the following summer doing similar volunteer work at the Esparto Migrant Center. He is passionate about issues surrounding Latinos, and this year became the communications director for the Latino student union, Latinos Unidos, where he participated in a public debate on affirmative action and organized the school's anti-discrimination week. Antonio has also taken a leadership role as a Camp Putah volunteer, A SLEWS volunteer (where he worked to restore native plants to our local ecosystem), and as a St. James Religious Education Volunteer Teaching Aid. He dedicates most of his time to the student-run theater program ACME

Civil Rights Advocacy: Diane Evans.

Diane has been the local chairperson of the Davis MoveOn Council engaging hundreds of citizens by hosting teaching events regarding universal health care and environmental issues, protest vigils at the Farmer's Market. Diane has collaborated with a number of groups such as the Union of Concern Scientists, Davis 911, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis, the Cool Davis Festival and Move to Amend to create open dialogues around social justice issues. She works with religious groups and Big Screen Cinema, showing films such as, "To Kill or to Cure" to gain support for propositions 34 (end the death penalty in California) and proposition 36 (modifications to the 3 strikes and you are out law). She was involved with an ad hoc group of Davis citizens to put on a Martin Luther King skit to fight apathy and the generation gap. For a year, she was part of the Davis GMO campaigning to have GMOs listed when used in food. With the Cool Davis Festival, she has impacted the Davis children by organizing activities that encourage children to formulate and make public statements: The 1st year the kids made puppets from trash and committed to teach 4 facts to family and friends. The 2nd year, the children made murals asking the public to protect bugs and our food from pesticides. She is working with HRC to replace racism with racial compassion, diversity nurturance and protection

Excellence in Community Involvement:

- **Davis Odd Fellows Lodge.** Lodge members, all volunteers, are actively involved in the community and take great pride in supporting community and charitable groups in big and little ways. Odd Fellows host monthly bingo games providing financial support for dozens of different community groups such as the Mexican American Concilio of Yolo County, ALS support, Yolo SPCA, Davis Bridge, Camp Kesem and many others; over the last two years, over \$16,000 was provided to these groups. Odd Fellows have provided direct financial grants to numerous groups and organizations including Yolo County CASA, Yolo Interfaith Immigration Network and many others. Odd Fellows hosted the Hope for Haiti providing some \$22,000 to Haiti for earthquake relief. Odd Fellowss have allowed community groups to use the Lodge for their functions with no charge – those groups include the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Dinner, Yolo Hospice, Pine Tree Gardens, and the Yolo Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Center,

Community Employment Services (assisting persons with developmental disabilities) among others. The nomination form includes many other forms of assistance and involvement with organizations in town dealing with mental illness, poverty, homelessness, foster care, etc.

- **Davis Schools Orchestral Music Association (DSOMA) and the Robert and Yinette Chang Family Trust Foundation.** For about eight years, the Robert and Yinette Chang Family have made regular grant donations to the Davis Schools Orchestral Music Association (DSOMA), the combined secondary orchestra boosters in the Davis schools, to fund music outreach to the Davis community. One of the longest running programs in this project is the “Chang Scholarship Program.” The Chang Scholarships allow students in grades 4 to 8 the opportunity to take private lessons from a high school orchestra student who is paid an appropriate stipend from the Chang Family Foundation. Parent volunteers with DSOMA have managed this program. The scholarships are made available to student musicians in grades 4 to 8 who could not otherwise take private lessons on their own, usually for financial considerations.

DSOMA has used this program as an opportunity to help make the school orchestra program more accessible to a representative demographic profile of the district. DSOMA made a request for demographic information of the secondary orchestra program (grades 7-12) for 2007-08, and again for 2012-13. This data was requested to measure if there was any improvement in program participation among under-represented groups. The 2007-08 data showed that there was under-representation among Hispanic/Latino students, low SES (socio-economic status), and ELL (English language learners). The 2012-13 data showed improvements in all three areas:

Public Servant of the Year: Tracie Olsen.

Tracie Olson took over as public defender in Yolo County in June of 2009. The Yolo County Public Defender’s Office provides defendants in Yolo County with a top notched indigent defense. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the seminal case Gideon v. Wainwright in which, in 1963, the US Supreme Court granted people the right to criminal defense counsel in all criminal matters. Indigent Defense is at the heart of making sure that people of all races, creeds, ethnicities, and income status are provided a fair trial which is at the forefront of the goals of Davis Human Relations Commission. As the leader of the Public Defender’s Office, Ms. Olson insures that everyone in Yolo County receives a fair trial. While Ms. Olson does not reside in Davis or even Yolo County, her work and advocacy on behalf of hundreds of Davis residents caught up in the legal system makes her very worthy of this honor.

Attachment

1. Draft Proclamation

PROCLAMATION

HONORING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF THONG HY HUYNH

WHEREAS, May 4, 2013 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Thong Hy Huynh, who was a 17 year old student at Davis High School when he was killed in a racially motivated murder; and

WHEREAS, the brutal murder of Thong Hy Huynh stunned and saddened the Davis community; and
WHEREAS, we celebrate his life and mourn the tragic circumstances of his death; and

WHEREAS, we should use the memory of Thong Hy Huynh's tragic death to continue to remind the community that we do not condone nor will we tolerate the use of violence, intimidation, insults, or other disrespectful behavior; and

WHEREAS, his death has become a motivation for the continuation of the mission of the Davis Human Relations Commission and the City's seminal Civil Rights ordinance to promote diversity and eradicate discrimination; and

WHEREAS, we continue to use the memory of Thong Hy Huynh's death as a reminder to teach our youth and all of this community the importance of understanding and respecting differences in our community, state, nation, and world; and

WHEREAS, we continue to fight for social justice, tolerance, and mutual understanding of the common bonds that bring us together rather than the differences that set us apart; and

THEREFORE, on behalf of the Davis City Council and the citizens of Davis, we urge the community to come together to teach our children to stand against hatred, violence, and bigotry; to promote tolerance and love; to celebrate diversity; to never forget the lessons that the death of Thong Hy Huynh has taught us; and to pledge to meaningfully honor his memory.

May 21, 2013

Joseph F. Krovoza
Mayor

Daniel M. Wolk
Mayor Pro Tem

Lucas Frerichs
Councilmember

Brett Lee
Councilmember

Rochelle Swanson
Councilmember