



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 21-876, **Version:** 1

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Report regarding a resolution renaming the Community Learning Center as the Gene Mullin Community Learning Center in honor of Gene Mullin. (*Valerie Sommer, Library Director*)

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff recommends that City Council receive a recommendation from the Library Board of Trustees and adopt a Resolution to rename the Community Learning Center (CLC) as the Gene Mullin Community Learning Center.**

### **BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION**

Former California State Assembly Member, South San Francisco Mayor and City Council Member Eugene R. Mullin (Gene) passed away on April 5, 2021. Gene taught social studies at South San Francisco High School for 32 years. His work both in the classroom and in public life made life better for students individually and for our community. He was also a strong advocate of the Library's Community Learning Center (CLC), and renaming this public-facing learning venue in his honor is eminently appropriate.

Gene was on City Council during the planning, renovation, and startup of the CLC. He was also heavily involved in community meetings and outreach that helped to determine the CLC's program focus on family support, ESL classes, literacy programming, and afterschool homework programs for local elementary school children. On October 23, 1997, then-Council Member Mullin led the first of three planning meetings at Grand Avenue Library, which was attended by Old Town community members, City and SSFUSD staff, and representatives of community-based organizations. The goal of this group was to create a focused vision for a community learning center and to examine existing resources. The group identified two main program areas: (1) parent/family learning and (2) basic skills tutoring for youth and adults.

The CLC opened on March 20, 2001. Gene was vice mayor on opening day, and his name is memorialized on the building plaque. The CLC's tagline is *Opening Doors to Success*, a key value identified in CLC planning and implementation.

Prior to his passing, Gene designated the CLC for any memorial donations in his honor following his death. The CLC has received approximately \$17,000 in donations in memory of Gene.

Public requests have been received in writing and verbally to staff, recommending the CLC be renamed in Gene's honor. The family, led by California Assembly Speaker Pro Tempore Kevin Mullin, is in favor of this honor. The CLC building is owned by the South San Francisco Unified School District (SSFUSD); the current agreement is up for renewal in 2029. Gene was a long-time SSFUSD teacher and a strong advocate for supporting local families through learning opportunities provided by Library staff via CLC afterschool homework programs/learning hubs.

### **CITY PROTOCOL AND TIMELINE OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Administrative Instruction Section 1, #4, which defines policies, responsibilities and procedures associated with naming of City facilities, was updated in 2005. In order to meet the criteria for having an amenity named for an individual, the policy requires that the following conditions be met:

*The individual, their family or a community organization has made exceptional contributions to the City, including one or more of the following: a) financial gifts; b) public service as an elected official; c) public service as a community volunteer; and d) long term sponsorship agreements. There must be a well-defined connection associated with the contributions of the individual or community organization and the City facility.*

*The significance of the contribution from the individual/organization needs to be evaluated in terms of the service impact of the City facility.*

*Individuals and organizations that have made contributions of regional or community-wide significance may be considered for name of facilities that serve the region or community. Individuals and organizations that have made contributions of areas or neighborhood-wide significance may be considered for naming of facility that serve areas or neighborhoods within the City.*

In accordance with the policy, this request was forwarded to the City Council Naming Committee, Ad-Hoc. At the May 10, 2021, meeting of the City Council Naming Committee, Committee members Mayor Mark Addiego and Council Member Flor Nicolas were in favor of this renaming opportunity. As the owning entity of the CLC, SSFUSD participation in the decision-making process was the next step. A formal presentation was provided at the June 9, 2021 meeting of the City/SSFUSD Liaison Committee, which was attended by Mayor Mark Addiego, Vice Mayor Mark Nagales, SSFUSD School Board President Daina Lujan, and SSFUSD School Board Clerk Patricia Murray. The Liaison Committee directed staff to move forward with a presentation to the full School Board. The presentation to the SSFUSD School Board took place on July 15, 2021, and concluded with the Board modifying the facilities naming policy to allow for less than a one-year wait after the passing of a prospective honoree and directing staff to follow the SSFUSD naming process. The process involves organizing a citizens' advisory committee for community input and forwarding a recommendation to the School Board for approval of a resolution to name/rename a school district facility.

City and SSFUSD staff followed guidelines set forth in School Board policy 7310 by co-hosting a meeting of a citizens' advisory committee on October 20, 2021 to review and consider the request. The agenda packet was shared with community via website calendar postings, in the Library on the public notices display, and via City and SSFUSD electronic communication channels. At 5:00 PM on October 20, 2021, the committee met in an open, virtual meeting via Zoom, during which background information was presented and community and committee members offered comments. After receiving positive input from community members, the committee added their own support and agreed to forward their consensus to rename the CLC in honor of Gene Mullin to the School Board for adoption of a resolution.

At the November 18, 2021 meeting of the South San Francisco Unified School District Board of Trustees, School Board Members recommended the adoption of Resolution No. 21-55 approving the City of SSF's request to rename the CLC in honor of Eugene R. Mullin (Gene). The Resolution passed unanimously and is attached to this packet.

The Library Board of Trustees reviewed this request twice in an open, virtual ZOOM meeting - at their June 22, 2021 and November 23, 2021 regular meetings and both times directed staff, via consensus, to forward a recommendation to City Council to rename the CLC in honor of Gene Mullin.

## GENE MULLIN - HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMUNITY, EDUCATIONAL, CIVIC AND LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

### Education and Career

- Graduated USF's School of Education (2011 Alumnus of the Year)
- Taught social studies at South San Francisco High School for 32 years; coached high school basketball for two decades; "He was my favorite teacher" is oft-repeated throughout his presence
- Active in the California Teachers Association (CYA) for over 30 years and served as president of the SSF CTA over several years
- Founded the joint city/SSFUSD Youth in Government program with former Mayor and Council Member Roberta Teglia, which debuted in 1981, and coordinated this event from 1981-1999, inspiring and mentoring scores of students to give back to their communities through careers in government and participation in local issues
- At the April 17, 2002, mock city council meeting, the Youth Government Day participants presented a proclamation in honor of Gene for "his continued dedication to the Youth Government Day Program." Included in this proclamation are two special items from his students that illustrate Gene's commitment to students and education:

*WHEREAS, throughout his distinguished career in education and public service Gene received numerous awards and acknowledgements, including 1979 South San Francisco City Council Outstanding Citizen, 1990 San Mateo County Bar Association Liberty Bell, 1991 San Mateo County Teacher of the Year, and 1996 California Teacher Association's State Teacher of the Year; and*

*WHEREAS, Gene has a proven record of community leadership and is committed to improving the State educational system for South San Francisco and the County of San Mateo.*

### Local Non-Profit Volunteerism

- Served on the boards of:
  - Ability Path
  - HIP Housing
  - South San Francisco Public Library Foundation
  - San Mateo County Historical Society
  - BayBio
  - Families on Track (at Parkway Heights Middle School)
  - Seton Medical Center

Lifelong history lover, influencing his chosen career and community volunteerism

- Longstanding member of the Historical Society of South San Francisco
- Honored with the 2010 Victor John Feudale Award from the Historical Society of South San Francisco for outstanding service to the South San Francisco community and his advocacy, support, and preservation of local history
- Master of ceremonies for the Historical Society of South San Francisco's Annual Awards and Fundraising Banquet for over 20 years
- Board member, San Mateo County Historical Association
- Member of the South San Francisco Historical Preservation Commission from 1986-1992
- Gene was involved in several local history initiatives including an update of the South San Francisco Once-Upon-A-Time Coloring Book, which is given to every third grade student in the district; a celebration of 100 years of high school education at South San Francisco High School; a compilation of renowned SSF personalities; and the memorializing of said personalities in SSF facilities.

Local Government

- South San Francisco City Council member (1995-2002); Mayor (1998 and 2002)
- South San Francisco Planning Commissioner (1972-1980)
- Highlights from a resolution when Gene "retired" from City Council to become a California State Assembly Member in Sacramento:

*WHEREAS, Gene has provided leadership on important issues through his participation on many City Council subcommittees, including Council liaison to the South San Francisco School District, Aircraft Noise Insulation Program, Oyster Point Advisory, and Kaiser Hospital; and*

*WHEREAS, over the years Gene's outstanding contributions to public service and improving the quality of community life has included his influential role in creating the South San Francisco Community Learning Center, increasing the number of community child care centers, developing an East of 101 transportation demand management program, participating on the board of directors for the Bay Area Bioscience Center and Families on Track, coordinating the annual Youth in Government Day Program, advocating the mitigation of airport noise, encouraging the development of workforce housing, and promoting smart growth by incorporating housing at transportation centers and preserving open space*

State Government

- Elected to the California State Assembly, 19<sup>th</sup> District (2002-2008)

- Chair, Housing Committee
- Chair, Assembly Education Committee
- Legislative highlights: Childcare
  - AB 305 (Mullin, 2003) creates an incentive for developers to include a child care facility as part of a housing development by requiring a city or county to grant an additional density bonus, concession, or incentive, unless the city or county makes a finding that the existing area has adequate child care facilities.
  - AB 529 (Mullin, 2003) addresses the critical shortage of child care for school-age children in California by increasing the number of children that family day care homes can provide care for.
  - AB 1282 (Mullin, 2006) extends the child care tax credit for employers to assure businesses that California supports their efforts to help provide child care for their employees.
- Legislative highlights: Education and Teacher Retirement
  - AB 597 (Mullin, 2007) allows for the development of web pages by students enrolled in a website design CTE program in a California high school or related CTE course.
  - AB 622 (Mullin, 2008) authorized GED test prep be provided to incarcerated youth during the day as part of their regular course of study, providing a pathway for future employment opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable to a young person without a high school diploma.
  - AB 1852 (Mullin, 2004) authorizes a member of the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) to earn a longevity bonus and makes various changes to an early retirement incentive program.
  - AB 2462 (Mullin, 2006) allows CalSTRS to help local school districts with 403(b) investments to assist teacher financial security.
- Legislative highlights: Elections
  - While ultimately unsuccessful during his time in Sacramento, Gene repeatedly advocated extending the right to vote to 17-year-olds that turn 18 by the general election. This was part of his mission as a former high school government teacher to help students feel a sense of ownership in the process by getting them to vote in primary elections, while still connected to their school and community. Gene tried to get the issue on the ballot; his son, Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Kevin Mullin, took up this important issue and successfully brought it to voters in 2020 through ACA 4.

Awards and Recognitions include:

- San Mateo County Teacher of the Year (1991)
- California Teachers Association's State Teacher of the Year in Politics (1996)
- Liberty Bell Award, San Mateo County Bar Association (1990)
- Excellence in Teaching Award, Mason-McDuffie Foundation (1996)
- Mentor Teacher, SSFUSD (1985-1999)
- Named "Legislator of the Year" by more than two dozen organizations during his service in Sacramento including a 2005 award from the League of California Cities
- Co-author of Educational Video of the Year: Child Abuse in the U.S. (1981)
- USF Alumnus of the Year (2011)
- Riordan High School, first Alumnus of the Year (2010)

FISCAL IMPACT

The anticipated fiscal impact is the cost of the interior description of Mr. Mullin's contributions, the exterior signage, and reception refreshments. Total cost is estimated as being between \$4,000 and \$7,000, depending upon type and placement of the signs on a freestanding monument in front of the building, or as letters affixed to the building. Library staff will explore funding sources.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Acknowledging and celebrating community members who have made a difference in South San Francisco is embedded in Priority #3: Quality of Life and Priority #6: Community Connections.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends that City Council receive a recommendation from the Library Board of Trustees and adopt a Resolution to rename the Community Learning Center as the Gene Mullin Community Learning Center in honor of Gene Mullin.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. City Administrative Instruction, Section 1, #4
2. SSFUSD Resolution No. 21-55