

Date of Hearing: April 25, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

ACR 130 (Patterson) – As Introduced January 31, 2022

SUBJECT: Ambassador Phillip V. Sanchez Memorial Interchange

SUMMARY: Designates the Alluvial Avenue undercrossing located at Fre-041-R30.949, State Route 41 at Postmile R30.949, in the County of Fresno as the Ambassador Phillip V. Sanchez Memorial Bridge.

EXISTING LAW: Assigns the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) the responsibility of operating and maintaining state highways. This includes the installation and maintenance of highway signs.

FISCAL EFFECT: Assigns the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) the responsibility of operating and maintaining state highways. This includes the installation and maintenance of highway signs.

COMMENTS: Phillip V. Sanchez was born on July 28, 1929, in his family's residence in Pinedale, a small community less than a mile's distance from what is now the interchange of State Highway 41 and Herndon Avenue in the County of Fresno.

Except for Presidential assignments to foreign countries, and military service deployments by the United States Army, Ambassador Sanchez lived on Alluvial Avenue in Pinedale, and embodied the promise of the American dream in his journey from poverty to prosperity as a leader in government, business, education, and publishing.

He became the highest ranking Hispanic official in the administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Ronald Reagan, as a United States Ambassador and Director of the United States Office of Economic Opportunity.

While serving as the Director of the United States Office of Economic Opportunity, with a budget of \$400,000,000 and a nationwide staff of 262,000 employees, Ambassador Sanchez was frequently lauded by members of Congress, from both sides of the aisle, for his leadership and accountability to taxpayers.

Adversity never kept Ambassador Sanchez, who was fatherless since he was six years old, from succeeding. He graduated magna cum laude from Clovis High School and Coalinga City College, and summa cum laude from California State University, Fresno. He was President and Founder of the first Sigma Chi Fraternity Chapter at California State University, Fresno, and was a trustee and former president of the National Hispanic University.

While a student at California State University, Fresno, he enlisted in the California Army National Guard as Private (E-1), the lowest rank, and climbed through the ranks to become Master Sergeant, the highest enlisted grade. Ambassador Sanchez was promoted to Warrant Officer 1 (WO1), the lowest grade, and climbed through the warrant grades to Warrant Officer 4 (WO4), the then highest grade.

He was accepted by the United States Army to attend Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. He graduated from Officer Candidate School with the highest levels of academic and leadership achievement, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. He climbed through the commissioned officer ranks to Colonel, the highest field grade in the United States Army.

A 1984 Pentagon review of military personnel records since World War I revealed that, among the millions who served, Ambassador Sanchez had advanced through all enlisted grades, all warrant officer grades, and all infantry commissioned grades to the highest field rank of colonel.

He retired after more than 40 years of military service in the United States Army, the United States Army Reserve, and the California Army National Guard. At the age of 33, as Chief Administrative Officer of the County of Fresno, Ambassador Sanchez was the youngest chief administrative officer in the history of all California counties.

He became a member of the Board of Trustees for the Clovis Unified School District, and served with distinction before being appointed by Governor Ronald Reagan to serve on the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, and, subsequently, was appointed to the Trustees of the California State University.

Ambassador Sanchez has a charter school named after him in the City of Fresno, as well as three orphanages located in Mexico that he founded and funded. He was a frequent newspaper and magazine contributor and accepted an appointment as publisher for the New York Tribune and Noticias del Mundo, and as President of CAUSA USA, a faith-based educational organization that denounced communism worldwide.

Ambassador Sanchez was preceded in passing by his grandson, Nickolaus Sanchez; and several siblings. He is survived by his children, Mark Sanchez and wife Sandy, Cynthia Elmo and husband Marc, Rand Sanchez and wife Marie, Phillip John Sanchez and wife Sara, Dorrine Orosco and husband Danny, Kristina Sanchez, and Ryan Bailey; and his sisters, Lillie Mayorga, and Sally Kuhn. He also loved 15 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren.

According to the author, “Ambassador Phillip Sanchez served his country, and his community, with honor. He was a selfless individual who gave all who could to improving the world and the lives of those around him. ACR 130 would honor his legacy and erect a highway memorial in the heart of the community he grew up in, as a testament to the positive impact one man can make.”

Committee Comments: It is the intent of the Assembly Transportation Committee to use the Memorial Highway Naming process to honor deceased Californians who have made significant public service contributions and also to reflect the diversity of our state. Currently, most named highways in California are for fallen male public safety officers, who made the ultimate sacrifice, and for whom we are indebted. However, these names do not fully represent the wide range of types of public service contributions, as well as the gender and racial diversity of California’s communities. The Assembly Transportation Committee is committed to working with the Department of Transportation in the upcoming year to improve the naming process to ensure greater equity and to better represent the diversity of California.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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