

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** May 1, 2018  
**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Carrie Dyer, Administrative Analyst  
**RE:** Thong Hy Huynh Memorial Awards for 2018

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### **Recommendation**

1. Receive draft minutes from the Human Relations Commission meetings of March 29 and April 12, 2018. (Attachments 1 and 2)
2. Ratify the following nomination recommendations from the Human Relations Commission for the 2018 Thong Hy Huynh Awards. Awards will be presented at the May 15 City Council meeting.
  - Lifetime Achievement: **Gwyneth Bruch**
  - Civil Rights Advocacy: **Wendi Counta**
  - Excellence in Community Involvement: **Rabbi Greg Wolfe**
  - Young Humanitarian: **Student Solidarity Task Force**

### **Fiscal Impact**

The cost of presenting the awards is included in the 2017-2018 budget, funded by the General Fund.

### **Council Goals**

The Huynh Awards represent ongoing business of the City and are not specifically included in the Council Goals.

### **Background and Analysis**

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 15. As per policy, staff brings the Commission recommendations to the City Council for review and ratification prior to issuing the awards.

This year’s awards include the following categories: Lifetime Achievement, Civil Rights Advocacy, Young Humanitarian and Excellence in Community Involvement. There were no

nominations received in the category of Public Servant of the Year. The nomination guidelines, which includes descriptions of each category, is included as **Attachment 3**.

The Commission believes the recommendations are the best and most appropriate nominations in each category and asks the Council to ratify the nominations. The Commission is recommending the following nominations to the City Council (with summaries taken from nominations):

**Lifetime Achievement: Gwyneth Bruch**

*Ms. Bruch has been a teacher at DSHS for over 20 years, for courses as diverse as Beginning and Advanced Drama and Science Fiction, and has directed the Drama Department, putting on several productions each year, directly affecting thousands of students and community members. Additionally, Ms Bruch for many years has also been one of the adult advisors and the classroom host for the Black Student Union, which meets weekly.*

*In her work she embodies a deep respect and abiding enthusiasm for young people, using theatrical production to elevate both issues of social justice and the power of young people to address them. When several incidents of hate occurred on the DHS campus this fall, Ms. Bruch announced that she would be looking for a spring production that would help the community understand and process events that are both well understood and difficult reconcile.*

*Ms. Bruch embodies so much of what the Thong Hy Huynh Award is intended for: an abiding personal and professional commitment to justice and civil rights, ongoing efforts to use the powers of an institution to open and change people's minds, and the warmth of personal relationships to model the way things could be.*

**Civil Rights Advocacy: Wendi Counta**

*For more than 20 years, Wendi has been working with children in the Davis community. Since 2012, she has served as the Executive Director of Progress Ranch. This program serves boys 8-14 needing a temporary home. Wendi works very hard to provide a home-like rather than institutional environment and includes mental health professional assistance to help the boys grow and mature despite the difficult circumstances they have gone through.*

*The importance of advocating for them is paramount for Wendi as is evident in the passion and commitment she brings to her work. She understands that the meaning of social justice is providing access to opportunity for all. Her advocacy for keeping children that would be bound for the school to prison pipeline does not end at the end of her workday. She is always available and invested in finding ways to extend dignity and inclusion to this segment of our community. She makes sure that the goal of helping the boys put roots down in the community is reached. Many of them play in local sports programs — like AYSO soccer and Junior Blue Devils football — participate in city of Davis camps and attend Davis public schools. Most importantly, she understands that advocating for true inclusion in our community means calling out discrimination against these children when it is needed.*

**Excellence in Community Involvement: Rabbi Greg Wolfe**

*Rabbi Greg has been an interfaith leader in the Davis community for more than 20 years and through that time has positively influenced many people. As a man of faith and as a community leader for his congregation of 260 families, he moves and inspires others to engage in mutual understanding.*

*Rabbi Greg said “there’s very little you can accomplish on your own. A lot of things really take a village.” Under his leadership, his synagogue has raised money for refugees of the Sudanese war. He recently joined a coalition called Sacramento Act, which empowers individuals to address issues of racial and social injustice. He is also part of an interfaith environmental justice group and has done work with the Phoenix Coalition. Rabbi Greg is currently participating in the YES (Youth Exchange and Study) Program, which is run by Congress and was established in 2002 in response to 9-11. The program provides scholarships to youth, aged 15-18, who are from predominantly Muslim countries, to live in the U.S. for a year. The list goes on and on.*

*Rabbi Greg was one of the original founders of the Celebration of Abraham, which is a get-together held annually by local leaders in the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities. The event is lauded as a bridge-builder and community-builder for people of the Abrahamic faiths*

*Last year, in our town, hateful things were said about Jewish people. Rabbi Greg reached out and engaged in authentic dialogue about the incident. Reaching out. Sharing in understanding. Building understanding. Standing up for people. That is who Rabbi Greg is.*

#### **Young Humanitarian: Student Solidarity Task Force**

*This group of students formed in the fall of 2017 in response to the incidents of hate and discrimination targeting Black, Jewish and LGBTQ people at the high school. The members of the group initially represented the Black Student Union, the Jewish Student Union and the Genders and Sexualities Alliance. The group now includes students from other racial and ethnic constituencies as well.*

*Very concerned that students and staff are unaware of the micro- and macro aggressions that students on non-dominant groups experience on a regular basis as part of their schooling, members of the SSTF have volunteered to present panels in six different venues. On these panels they have spoken about both what has helped them feel like they belong in educational spaces, what has made them feel excluded, and about potential changes and learning staff and students can do. Additionally, In order to educate their fellow student—those who are unaware of the difficulties students targeted by oppressions face at school--the SSTF is working on assembling a playlist of short, 1-2 minute stories that they record representing actual experiences of diverse students on campus.*

*The students of the SSTF embody some of the best of this generation: a sense of responsibility based on personal experience and universal well-being, and an approach to change that insists that our capacity to listen to all voices and perspectives directly affects our ability to solve the problems of the present and the future.*

#### **Attachments:**

1. Draft HRC minutes from March 29, 2018
2. Draft HRC minutes April 12, 2018
3. 2018 Nomination Guidelines



**City of Davis**  
**Human Relations Commission Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 29, 2018**  
**6:30 P.M.**

**1. Call to Order & Roll Call**

*Roland calls the meeting to order.*

*Members Present: Alam, Clinton, Davis, Mosley, Roland*

*Members Absent: Allen, Madden, O'Rourke-Powell, Partida*

*Others Present: Mayor Davis, Friedman (ex-officio), Gutierrez (ex-officio), Dyer (staff)*

**2. Approval of Agenda**

*Clinton moved and Davis seconded approval of the agenda as presented. Motion passed as follows:*

*AYES: Alam, Clinton, Davis, Mosley, Roland*

*NOES: None*

*ABSTAIN: None*

*ABSENT: Allen, Madden, O'Rourke-Powell, Partida*

**3. Brief Announcements from Staff, Commissioners and Liaisons ]**

- Roland provided update on the upcoming Cesar Chavez Celebration, happening on March 31.*
- Roland provided update on Unconscious Bias Awareness Training that many commissioners attended on March 22.*
- Roland notified the commission of the YIIN fundraiser happening on April 14 at the Senior Center.*
- Alam notified the Commission of a concern regarding notification of "Punish a Muslim Day". Was not aware of specific conversation in Davis. Staff forwarded the information to the Police Department.*

**4. Public Comment**

*None*

**5. Consent Calendar (6:55)**

*Roland moved and Mosely seconded approval of the minutes from January 25 and February 1<sup>st</sup> as presented. The motion passed as follows:*

*AYES: Alam, Clinton, Davis, Mosley, Roland*

*NOES: None*

*ABSTAIN: None*

*ABSENT: Allen, Madden, O'Rourke-Powell, Partida*

**6. Regular Items**

- A. Nelson Mandela's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration.** *Mayor Robb Davis briefed the Commission on the group of 25 Mandela Fellows that will be visiting Davis for six*

*weeks this summer. Their visit coincides with the date of Nelson Mandela's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, on July 18<sup>th</sup>, and there are efforts to coordinate a birthday celebration in Davis in honor of him.*

*Davis moves with second by Mosely that the Human Relations Commission collaborate with UC Davis Global Affairs to coordinate an event involving the Mandela Fellows visiting Davis to honor and celebrate Nelson Mandela's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Motion passed as follows:*

*AYES: Alam, Clinton, Davis, Mosley, Roland*

*NOES: None*

*ABSTAIN: None*

*ABSENT: Allen, Madden, O'Rourke-Powell, Partida*

**B. Thong Hy Huynh Awards.**

*The Commission reviewed the nominations of the annual Thong Hy Huynh awards and took the following action:*

*Roland moved with second by Clinton to recommend Gwyneth Bruch for the Lifetime Achievement Award, the Student Solidarity Task Force for the Young Humanitarian Award and Wendi Counta for Civil Rights Advocacy, with a reopener for the Excellence in Community Involvement and Public Servant of the Year categories to April 10. The motion passed as follows:*

*AYES: Alam, Clinton, Davis, Mosley, Roland*

*NOES: None*

*ABSTAIN: None*

*ABSENT: Allen, Madden, O'Rourke-Powell, Partida*

**C. Subcommittee Proposals.**

*Item Postponed.*

**B. Election of 2018 Vice Chair.**

*Item Postponed.*

**7. Commission and Staff Communications**

*None.*

**8. Adjourn**

*The meeting adjourned at 8:27.*

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Carrie Dyer  
Analyst  
City Manager's Office*



**City of Davis**  
**Human Relations Commission**  
**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**Thursday, April 12, 2018**  
**6:00 p.m.**

**1. Call to Order & Roll Call**

*Allen calls the meeting to order.*

*Members Present: Allen, Alam, Clinton, Davis, Mosley, O'Rourke-Powell, Partida, Roland*

*Members Absent: Madden*

*Others Present: Snow (ex-officio), Dyer (staff)*

**2. Approval of Agenda**

*Clinton moved with second by Davis approval of the agenda as presented. Motion Passed as follows:*

*AYES: Allen, Alam, Clinton, Davis, Mosley, O'Rourke-Powell, Partida, Roland*

*NOES: None*

*ABSTAIN: None*

*ABSENT: Madden*

**3. Public Comment**

*None*

**4. Regular Items**

**A. Thong Hy Huynh Awards.** *The Commission reviewed nominations received during the extended period for the annual Thong Hy Huynh award in the category of Excellence in Community Involvement and took the following action:*

*Roland moved with second by Partida to recommend Rabbi Greg Wolfe as the recipient of the Thong Hy Huynh Award in the category of Excellence in Community Involvement. The motion passed as follows:*

*Clinton moved with second by Davis approval of the agenda as presented. Motion Passed as follows:*

*AYES: Allen, Alam, Clinton, Davis, Mosley, O'Rourke-Powell, Partida, Roland*

*NOES: None*

*ABSTAIN: None*

*ABSENT: Madden*

**B. Adjourn**

*The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 to the next regular meeting of April 26, 2018.*

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Carrie Dyer  
Analyst  
City Manager's Office*



**2018 AWARD CATEGORIES AND NOMINATION GUIDELINES**  
FOR  
**THE THONG H. HUYNH MEMORIAL AWARD**  
SPONSORED BY  
**THE CITY OF DAVIS HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

The City of Davis 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 Thong Hy Huynh Award was first presented in 1986.

**AWARD CATEGORIES**

1. Lifetime Achievement  
Awarded for significant civil rights efforts over a long period of time while improving the quality of life in Davis. The recipient may be an individual or community organization that has promoted positive human relations in the community.
2. Young Humanitarian  
Awarded to an individual in grades K-16 (elementary through undergraduate or equivalent) for significant efforts in improving the quality of life in Davis. Nominees have directly addressed the needs of specific groups within the community in the areas of human or civil rights or education.
3. Civil Rights Advocacy  
Awarded to an individual or organization for significant efforts and achievement in any of the following areas:
  - Speaking on behalf of, and giving voice to, the disadvantaged and disempowered.
  - Promoting positive human relations, civil rights, cultural awareness or peaceful means of conflict resolution.
  - Improving the quality of life for Davis residents through the areas of health, human services, housing or employment.
4. Excellence in Community Involvement (Awarded to a For-Profit Business and/or Non-Profit Organization)  
Awarded to a business or organization that has a record of significant efforts in promoting and practicing equal opportunity, positive human relations, and/or civil rights in Davis.
5. Public Servant of the Year  
Awarded to a local public servant who has displayed exceptional interpersonal skills under challenging circumstances. These efforts have resulted in effective conflict resolution or intervention and have promoted positive human relations in our multicultural and diverse community.



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**GUIDELINES FOR NOMINATIONS AND SELECTION OF RECIPIENTS**

*The Thong Hy Huynh Award process is designed to be as inclusive and as transparent as possible in order to protect the integrity of the award.*

**Nomination Process**

1. Nominations may be submitted by anyone, including Human Relations commissioners or City Council members. Current Commission or City Council members may not be nominated for an award. Commissioners cannot nominate a family member, partner or spouse.
2. Nominees should be residents of Davis or have been active in work that has impacted the Davis community.
3. All nominations must be submitted by the deadline. No nominations will be accepted, from commissioners or other citizens, after that date.
4. Nominations must be in writing and must include contact information.
5. Each nomination form should be for only one category, however, a person may be nominated for more than one category.

**Selection Process**

1. Any Huynh award winners in the previous 10 years is not eligible for nomination in the same category. Current voting commissioners are not eligible to receive an award. If a current commissioner is on the board of an organization, that organization is not eligible to be nominated for an award that year.
2. Any commissioner who has a conflict of interest with a nomination (i.e. a family member, partner or spouse nominated or an organization nominated for which Commissioner is employed or holds a leadership position) for an award must recuse him/herself from participation in deliberations and voting for that award.
3. If the Commission determines no nominations received in a particular category are appropriate, no award will be presented in that category.

*(See reverse for Award Categories)*