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A Quarterly Publication of the Figueroa Corridor Partnership Business Improvement District

The Coalition to Honor Kobe Bryant and Preserve Figueroa Street Fights for the History of LA and its Future



On August 25, 2020 Council Members Curren Price and Herb Wesson introduced a motion to rename a portion of Figueroa Street to Kobe Bryant Boulevard from Olympic Boulevard to Martin Luther King Boulevard and would include LA Live, Staples Center, USC, Banc of the West Stadium (home of LAFC) and the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

Although everyone loves Kobe, not everyone loves the street name change for valid reasons. The Coalition to Honor Kobe Bryant and Preserve Figueroa Street, is pushing for a plaza or smaller portion to be renamed. They feel there is significant historical significance of Jose Figueroa that is being lost along with the economic impact to the businesses along the street that the council did not take in to consideration.

Figueroa Street from Pico Street to Exposition Boulevard was named for Governor Jose Figueroa in 1857. Figueroa was a Mestizo, born of Spanish and indigenous parents. He was a soldier, a top general in the Mexican War of Independence from Spain, a national hero and the best governor of California during the Mexican era. Figueroa was also the author of the first book ever printed and published in California, La Manifiesto a la Republica Mejicano in 1835. When the Mexican legislature voted to secularize the missions in California in 1833, Figueroa advocated giving half of the mission lands to the Native American people. Figueroa became ill and died before achieving his objectives, but his legacy remains and is part of our history. Erasing Figueroa is a step in the wrong direction for those who cherish the history of Los Angeles and particularly our city's Mexican and Native American origins. The Coalition to Honor Kobe Bryant and Preserve Figueroa Street believes that Kobe should be recognized, but not by erasing the name Figueroa from the original three miles of Figueroa Street. Instead we want to recognize Kobe by creating a Kobe Bryant Square on 11th and Figueroa, at the site of the Staples Center where he led to Lakers to so many victories, or on Figueroa Street between Olympic and Pico, thus preserving the 163-year-old name of the street.

Figueroa Street has also undergone a tremendous transformation since the late 90s when most of the street was boarded up and businesses closed. Gang activity, vandalism, drugs, and graffiti were everywhere. Property owners on Figueroa Street reached into their pockets and created a Business Improvement District (BID) to make the area clean and safe, and investing nearly \$30 million to date. The area, branded by the BID as The Figueroa Corridor for the last 23 years is not only clean and safe, but has seen billions of dollars in new development as a result of the property owner's investment. Preserving the name of the street is important for acknowledging Jose Figueroa, as well as the work that has gone into revitalizing and branding the area.

3rd Quarter Clean Team Stats

