



Edwin M. Lee, Mayor
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

Date: August 27, 2013
To: Recreation and Park Commission
From: Lisa Bransten
Director of Partnerships
Re: Plaque at Victoria Manalo Draves Park

Agenda Item Wording

Discussion and possible action to approve the installation of a permanent plaque recognizing the achievements of Victoria Manalo Draves on the fence at the northeast entrance to Victoria Manalo Draves Park on Folsom and Sherman Streets, and authorizing the General Manager to approve wording for the plaque.

Background

In 2005 the Recreation and Parks Commission changed the name of SOMA Park to Victoria Manalo Draves Park at the urging of a group of community members. The name change was supported by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission and the South of Market Project Area Committee (SOMPAC).

These groups supported the name change to honor an Olympian who was born in and trained in San Francisco and became the first woman of Filipino heritage to win an Olympic gold medal. Victoria Manalo Draves was born in San Francisco to an English immigrant mother and a Filipino immigrant father and lived in the SOMA neighborhood for 23 years. She studied at the school adjacent to this park – now Bessie Carmichael Elementary School – when Bessie Carmichael was Principal.

In the 1948 Olympic Games Victoria Manalo Draves achieved many firsts:

- The first woman in Olympic history to win gold medals in both springboard and platform diving events in the same games.
- The only swimmer or diver to win two individual gold medals at that time
- The first American woman of Filipino heritage to win an Olympic gold medal.

Supporters of the park renaming and of the plaque believe that Victoria Manalo Draves is an important role model to all San Franciscans and in particular to the Asian and specifically the Filipino community, which is large in this area. Approximately 45% of students at Bessie Carmichael School identified themselves as being in the Filipino group.

Since many people who use VMD Park do not know who Victoria Manalo Draves was or what she accomplished, the community would like provide that history by installing a plaque near the entrance to the park that takes note of some of her achievements. The plaque and its installation will be funded by West Bay Pilipino Multi Service, Inc., a 45 year old non-profit serving the Filipinos in the SoMA neighborhood.



Financial Impact

Approximately \$3,000

Recommendation

Department management and staff recommend approval of this plaque installation.

Supported by

Department staff

Supervisor Jane Kim

SFPD Asian & Pacific Islander Forum

Asian American Women Artists Association

Opposed By

No known at this time

People to contact:

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