



Agenda Item Report

Legislative Board: City Council
Date: March 3, 2026
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ITEM TITLE: Deliberation and possible action to select the 2026 Buda Local Legend (Community Relations & Destination Services Director Lysa Gonzalez) [PUBLIC TESTIMONY]

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Buda's Local Legend Award recognizes a Buda resident (current or former) who has made an impact on Buda and beyond. This person(s) is selected by the Buda City Council and then celebrated at the Buda's Birthday Music Festival. The nominations form for the Buda Local Legends was launched on January 21, 2026, and closed on February 20, 2026. There were 8 total nominees.

2. BACKGROUND/HISTORY

Since Buda's Birthday Music Festival serves as the City of Buda's founders day celebration, Council decided to recognize and honor those who have made an impact on the Buda community.

2022: The first Buda Local Legend was Jim Hollis in 2022. Jim moved to Buda 42 years ago when the population was less than 400. He served as the City's Mayor in the 1980s, has served as the President of the Emergency Services District Board for over 20 years, is an active member of the Buda Masonic Lodge, and has given endless hours of service to his community in numerous organizations and government capacities. He knows the history of the area and all the old stories. He never hesitates in sharing his knowledge and absolutely never meets a stranger. He still lives in Buda and remains active on his ranch here in Buda.

2023: The second Buda Local Legend was WC Clark. WC has toured relentlessly for years, including performances at the Chicago Blues Festival, European Blues Festivals, Ottawa and Toronto Blues Festivals, and more. Along the way he has met up with old fans and friends and undoubtedly gained new ones everywhere he plays. WC Clark was a Buda resident and played in Buda venues regularly. He was inducted into the Texas Heritage Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2023.

2024: Buda's third Local Legend, Chaplain Don Muchow, was recognized in 2024. After serving as the Navy's 20th Chief of Chaplains, where he guided millions of military personnel and their families, Rear Admiral Donald Muchow brought his spirit of service home to Buda. The Distinguished Service Medal recipient devoted over a decade as the Buda Police chaplain, led the local Ministerial Alliance, and continues supporting churches in need. Now recognized as a Local Legend, Muchow's quiet dedication to faith and community has made lasting impacts on the town he serves.

2025: Helen and Rene Alcala shaped daily life in Buda for decades through Helen's Casa Alde, the city's first Mexican restaurant and a gathering place rooted in warmth, generosity, and homemade tortillas. From Helen's tireless care for customers and students to Rene's familiar smile behind the

counter, the Alcala's created more than meals—they created community. Even after loss and hardship, their commitment to serving Buda never wavered. Long after their passing, the impact of Helen and Rene Alcala remains woven into the fabric of the city, a legacy of hospitality, heart, and tradition that Buda will always claim as its own.

3. ANALYSIS

The nomination form for this year's Buda Local Legend has closed. At the time of closing, there were 8 nominees. The nominees are listed in alphabetical order by last name.

Elias and Clarisa Bunton

Elias and Clarisa Bunton were among the earliest settlers of Antioch Colony and played a vital role in shaping its foundation. In 1874, they donated land for a community school and church, creating a space for education, worship, and gathering that served generations of families. Their generosity helped establish the heart of the community, and their legacy lives on through the many descendants who remain connected to Buda today. Recognizing Elias and Clarisa Bunton as Local Legends honors their leadership, their commitment to community, and the lasting impact they made on Buda's history.

Dodi Ellis

Dodi Ellis has deep roots in Buda and has spent the last 20 years helping shape the community's growth. With vision and determination, she led the transformation of the historic Buda Mill & Grain Co. into the vibrant shopping district now known as Buda Mill & Grain. The Mill has been in her family since 1963, and Dodi honored that legacy by reimagining the space, while preserving its character. Her leadership not only revitalized a historic property, but also raised the bar for future retail development in Buda. Through her vision and dedication, Dodi has left a lasting imprint on the heart of downtown.

Kadefa Hasanovic

Kadefa has been part of the Buda community for over a decade, generously donating her time to support events throughout the area. Her willingness to volunteer and show up wherever needed reflects her steady commitment to the people and spirit of Buda. Through her service, Kadefa helps strengthen the sense of connection that makes the community thrive.

TC and Geraldine McCormick

Dr. Charles McCormick and Geraldine "Jerry" McCormick dedicated decades of service to the Buda community. As the city's primary physician, Dr. McCormick delivered approximately 1,800 babies and became a quiet force in early desegregation. He served on the Buda School Board, helped integrate local schools, and later served on City Council and as Mayor from 1976 to 1982. Jerry McCormick was equally committed, serving as PTA President, Postmaster, and an active leader at First Baptist Church of Buda. Together, their lifelong service helped shape Buda's growth and strengthened the community for generations.

Kym Navarro

Kym Navarro served the Buda community for more than 10 years as Director of the Onion Creek Senior Center. During her tenure, she was dedicated to helping seniors thrive by providing educational, nutritional, and medical resources that supported their overall well-being. Kym built strong partnerships with local businesses and senior living organizations to expand opportunities and services for the community. Known for giving countless hours beyond her scheduled time, she consistently went above and beyond to serve Buda's seniors with compassion and commitment.

JB Owens

J.B. Owens is among Buda's longest-standing residents, with more than six decades rooted in the heart of the community. He lived on Cedar Street for 63 years before moving to Main Street, where he has continued to call Buda home for approximately 18 years. At 87 years old, J.B. represents a living connection to Buda's past, having witnessed and experienced the city's growth and change firsthand. His longstanding presence reflects the deep roots and enduring spirit that define the community.

Susan Ramirez

Susan Ramirez has made a meaningful impact on Buda through her leadership with Austin Angels. As a founder, she has worked to support children and families experiencing foster care by mobilizing volunteers, building partnerships, and creating strong mentoring programs. Her efforts provide stability, resources, and encouragement to vulnerable families while inspiring greater community involvement. Austin Angels is also establishing its National Headquarters in Buda, bringing national trainings and visitors to the city. Through her service, Susan continues to strengthen Buda with compassion and purpose.

Bob Shelton

Coach Bob Shelton was a legendary leader in Hays County and a foundational figure in what is now Hays CISD. A lifetime resident, he began his career at historic Buda High before becoming the first head football coach at Hays High when the district consolidated in 1968. Over a remarkable 47-year career at the same school, Coach Shelton built a legacy of excellence, including a 23-year, non-losing season streak and a run to the 1996 UIL State Championship game. He earned numerous honors, including induction into the Texas High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

Beyond the wins and awards, Coach Shelton was a mentor and role model to generations of students. His leadership and character left a lasting mark on Buda and Hays County.

Award and recognition

The Local Legend will receive VIP parking passes to all City of Buda events for 2026, is recognized on stage at the Buda's Birthday Celebration, is listed on the budasbirthday.com website, and is featured on a banner in the park for the duration of the event.

Voting

To ensure compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA) while maintaining a respectful and efficient selection process, City Council should select the annual Local Legend through a motion and majority vote conducted in open session.

This method is recommended because it is fully compliant with TOMA, avoids prohibited ballot-style voting, does not require lengthy criteria-based scoring process in open session, and is a clear affirmative vote.

4. FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact

HOT Funds:

\$300 - Buda Local Legend Award trophy
\$15 - Official parking pass printing

5. STRATEGIC PLAN/GOALS

OTHER

6. STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

Other.

7. PROS AND CONS

Not applicable

8. ALTERNATIVES

1. Council may select more than one Local Legend to recognize this year.
2. Council may verbally nominate and vote on a person not nominated by the public.

9. REQUESTED ACTION / SUGGESTED MOTION / RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Buda City Council select at minimum one person as the 2026 Buda Local Legend.

Attachments:

[Presentation - 2026 Local Legend Nominations.pdf](#)