CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM
AGENDA SUMMARY FORM

DEPARTMENT: Mayor & Council

AGENDA DATE: 2.27.24

CONTACT PERSON NAME AND PHONE NUMBER: Representative Cassandra Hernandez ~ 915.212.0003

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: District 3

STRATEGIC GOAL
Goal 4 - Enhance El Paso's Quality of Life through Recreational, Cultural and Educational Environments

SUBJECT:
APPROVE a resolution / ordinance / lease to do what? OR AUTHORIZE the City Manager to do what? Be descriptive of what we want Council to approve. Include $ amount if applicable.
Approve a resolution that City Council accepts the recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and hereby approves the renaming of the Ponder Park, located at 7500 W. H. Burges Dr, El Paso, TX 79925, within the City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas, as "James "Jimmy" Crouch Park".

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:
Discussion of the what, why, where, when, and how to enable Council to have reasonably complete description of the contemplated action. This should include attachment of bid tabulation, or ordinance or resolution if appropriate. What are the benefits to the City of this action? What are the citizen concerns?
James Crouch, lived a remarkable 90 years and garnered recognition from both the U.S. Army and the El Paso athletic community. A multifaceted individual, he excelled as a referee, a standout in softball, a highly decorated soldier, and achieved the prestigious honor of becoming the highest-ranking African-American civilian employee in Fort Bliss's history upon his retirement in 2010. He retired as a Chief Warrant Officer 4 after three decades of distinguished service in the Army and then continued working as a civilian employee for 32 years.
James Crouch made substantial contributions to the world of sports as a member of the International Softball Congress Fast Pitch teams from El Paso in 1961 and 1962 that won back to back championships. Which later earned him an induction into the El Paso Softball Hall of Fame as a player in 2015. His mentoring to younger officials, compassion for students and numerous honors from the Texas Association of Sports Officials allowed to induct into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame as a referee in 2006. His role as an official encompassed over 14,000 volleyball and basketball games at the high school level, for the city's Parks and Recreation Department, and within Fort Bliss tournaments.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:
Has the Council previously considered this item or a closely related one?
Yes, there have been previous City facility and park renaming after outstanding individuals in the community.

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:
How will this item be funded? Has the item been budgeted? If so, identify funding source by account numbers and description of account. Does it require a budget transfer?
The Applicant shall incur the customary costs associated with the renaming of the park, such as installing or replacing signs with the park name or any other signs posted or affixed to a facility.

**********************REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION**********************

RESOLUTION

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

THAT City Council accepts the recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and hereby approves the renaming of the Ponder Park, located at 7500 W. H. Burges Dr, El Paso, TX 79925, within the City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas, as "James "Jimmy" Crouch Park"; and

THAT Lillian W. Crouch, ("Applicant") shall incur the customary costs associated with the renaming of the park, such as installing or replacing signs with the park name or any other signs posted or affixed to a facility. Any proposed signs shall be reviewed and agreed upon by both the Parks and Recreation Department and Applicant, District 3.

PASSED AND APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2024.

CITY OF EL PASO:

_____
Oscar Leeser
Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Laura D. Prine
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Karla Saenz
Karla A. Saenz
Assistant City Attorney

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

_____
Pablo Caballero, Interim Director
Parks and Recreation

(Exhibit "A" on the following page)

City of El Paso
PARK NAMING/CHANGING
Application

Applicant information

Please print or type the information in black ink

Applicant Name: Lillian W. Crouch

Mailing Address: [redacted] City: El Paso Zip: 79902

Home Phone: [redacted] Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: [redacted]

Organization _____ ☐ Non-Profit

Proposed Name / Change

Park/Facility Location/Address: 7500 W H Burges Dr, El Paso, TX 79925

Current name of Park or Facility: Ponder Park ☐ Not Applicable

Suggested Name: James "Jimmy" Crouch Park

Category:

☒ Outstanding Individual(s)

Acknowledges the sustained contribution that has been made by such individual(s) to the City of El Paso and/or the development and management of the City's park and recreation system

☐ Common usage identifying the Neighborhood

Acknowledges the geographic location or common name that gives a particular identity to a neighborhood

☐ Historical Event, Person, Place

Preserves and honors the history of El Paso, its founders, other historical figures or local landmarks.

☐ Natural or Geographical Feature to the area

Acknowledges a prominent or unique natural or geological feature in the surrounding area.

☐ Benefit/Organization Acknowledgement

Major gift, acknowledges the significant benefit of a donation

☐ Other

Describe:

_____

_____

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA PARKS AND RECREATION STAFF ONLY	Date Received at PARD Admin: _____ Date District Rep. Notified: _____ Date of Committee Meeting: _____ Date of PRAB Meeting: _____ Date of City Council Meeting: _____

PARK NAMING/CHANGING

Supporting Documentation

Suggested Name: James"Jimmy" Crouch Park

Please provide a written narrative that supports the nomination for consideration. If proposing to name a park or facility after an outstanding person, a biography must also be attached and include material that identifies the individual's significance and notable reputation in the City of El Paso.

James Crouch, who lived a remarkable 90 years, garnered recognition from both the U.S. Army and the El Paso athletic community for his unwavering dedication. He etched his legacy as a multifaceted individual, excelling as a referee, a standout in softball, a highly decorated soldier, and achieving the prestigious honor of becoming the highest-ranking African-American civilian employee in Fort Bliss's history upon his retirement in 2010. Retiring as a Chief Warrant Officer 4 after three decades of distinguished service in the Army, James continued his journey as a civilian employee for 32 years.

Beyond the accolades and achievements that adorned his life, James Crouch emerged as a guiding light for numerous young minds in El Paso. He made substantial contributions to the world of sports as a member of the International Softball Congress Fast Pitch teams from El Paso in 1961 and 1962 that won back to back championships. Which later earned him an induction into the El Paso Softball Hall of Fame as a player in 2015.

His mentoring to younger officials, compassion for students and numerous honors from the Texas Association of Sports Officials allowed to induct into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame as a referee in 2006. His role as an official encompassed over 14,000 volleyball and basketball games at the high school level, for the city's Parks and Recreation Department, and within Fort Bliss tournaments.

He embodied the values of respect, truth, and love, offering reassurance to coaches and players whenever he walked onto the court or field. James Crouch's legacy will forever endure, his impact imprinted on the El Paso community and the world of sports.

Attach additional pages if needed. Supporting documentation is encouraged for all applications to help justify why this name should be chosen.

PARK NAMING/CHANGING FORM

Citizen Support

Suggested Name: James "Jimmy" Crouch Park

List eligibile members of the public who support the nomination:
Include name, address, telephone number and signature of fifty (50) individuals, ages 18 years or older who live within a mile radius of the park/facility.

Name	Address	Phone Number	Signature
Isabel Vigil	[redacted]		
Ramon Molina	[redacted]		
Heather Clirk-Cuellar	[redacted]		
Alex Cuellar	[redacted]		
Emma Acosta	[redacted]		
Ismael Enriquez	[redacted]		
Enriqueta G. Fierro	[redacted]		
Pat Bradley	[redacted]		
Debbie Bradley	[redacted]		
Virginia A Tilley	[redacted]		
Rudy Marez	[redacted]		
Yvonne Martin			

Suggested Name: James "Jimmy" Crouch Park

List eligibile members of the public who support the nomination:
Include name, address, telephone number and signature of fifty (50) individuals, ages 18 years or older who live within a mile radius of the park/facility.

	Name	Address	Phone Number	Signature
X	Manuel Chavira	[redacted]		
1	Marcus Carrillo	[redacted]		
2	Luis Macias	[redacted]		
X	Andrew Macias	[redacted]		
3	Bertha Ashemian	[redacted]		
4	Jose Ramos	[redacted]		

Citizen Support

PARK NAMING/CHANGING FORM

PARK NAMING/CHANGING FORM

Citizen Support

Suggested Name: James "Jimmy" Crouch Park

List eligibile members of the public who support the nomination:
Include name, address, telephone number and signature of fifty (50) individuals ages 18 years or older who live within a mile radius of the park facility.

	Name	Address	Phone Number	Signature
5	Martha De Santiago	[redacted]		Martha de Santiago
6	Bertha Montoya			Bertha Montoya
X	[illegible]			
7	Betha Banks			Betha Banks
8	Jorge Canteras			[illegible]
9	ROBERTO RAMOS			Roberto Ramos
10	Jessica Phillips			Jessica Phillips.
11	Claudia Martinez			[illegible]
12	Robert Martinez			[illegible]
13	Ramona Perez			Ramona Perez
14	Naomi Cardenas			[illegible]
15	MARGARET SCHAFER			Margaret Schafer
16	Chris Romo			[illegible]
17	Sergio Mitel			[illegible]
X	ANTONIO Lara			antonio Lara
18	[illegible]			[illegible]
19	Dannt Avila			[illegible]
20	Alpine Ricci			Alpine Ricci

Form 09-0001 Revised 11/06/12

PARK NAMING/CHANGING FORM

Citizen Support

Suggested Name: James "Jimmy" Crouch Park

List eligibile members of the public who support the nomination:
Include name, address, telephone number and signature of fifty (50) individuals, ages 18 years or older who live within a mile radius of the park facility.

	Name	Address	Phone Number	Signature
21	[illegible]	[redacted]		[illegible]
22	[illegible]			[illegible]
23	Rosalio Gonzalez	[redacted]		[illegible]
X	Paulo Andre			[illegible]
X	Frank Espino			[illegible]
X	Jason Alvarez			[illegible]
X	Dorothy Vaughan	[redacted]		[illegible]
X	[illegible]			[illegible]
X	Robert Almanzani			[illegible]
X	[illegible]			[illegible]
X	[illegible]			[illegible]
X	Ben Moreno			[illegible]

PARK NAMING/CHANGING FORM

Citizen Support

Suggested Name: Jonas "Jimmy" Crouch

List eligibile members of the public who support the nomination:
Include name, address, telephone number and signature of fifty (50) individuals, ages 18 years or older who live within a mile radius of the park facility.

Name	Address	Phone Number	Signature
Carolina Benetiz	[redacted]		Carolina Benetiz
Eric Corrello			Eric Corr
Hugo Vasquez			

24
25

PARK NAMING/CHANGING FORM

Citizen Support

Suggested Name: James "Jimmy" Crouch Park

List eligibile members of the public who support the nomination:
Include name, address, telephone number and signature of fifty (50) individuals, ages 18 years or older who live within a mile radius of the park/facility.

	Name	Address	Phone Number	Signature
26	Deanna Maldonado-Rocha	[redacted]		
X	John E Rosie Saldana			
27	Sarah Hernandez			
28	Karen M. Roberts			
29	Cecilia Cisneros	[redacted]		
30	Albert Yzaguirre			
31	Michael Bau			
32	Betty Keegan	[redacted]		Betty Keegan
33	Adam Bull			
34				
35	Laura Lara	[redacted]		
36	Roberto Perez			
37	Barbara Banuelos	[redacted]		
38	Dylan Reza			
39	Scott Weglertner			
40	Elvia Piscarcik	[redacted]		
41	Ron Lambert			
42	Joyce Payan			
43	Cassandra Phillips			

Form 09-0001 Revised 11/06/12

PARK NAMING/CHANGING FORM

Citizen Support

Suggested Name: Jamas "Jimmy" Crouch

List eligibile members of the public who support the nomination:
Include name, address, telephone number and signature of fifty (50) individuals, ages 18 years or older who live within a mile radius of the park facility.

	Name	Address	Phone Number	Signature
repeats from pg 3	Carolina Benetiz	[redacted]		Carolina Benetiz
repeats from pg 3	Eric Corrello			Eric Corre
repeats from pg 3	Hugo Vasquez			
44	Debbie Bradley			Debbie Bradley
45	Virginia S Able	[redacted]		Virginia S Able
46	Pat Bradley			Pat Bradley
47	[illegible]			[illegible]
X	[illegible]			
48	Gerardo Lopez	[redacted]		
49	Robert Preston			Robert Preston
50	Ilana Gomez			
51	Kenneth S. Bonschen			Kenneth S Bonschen
52	Margot Aguirre			
53	Elizabeth Freeman			

Texas Resolution: Recognizing Retirement, Military Service, and Career in Air Defense Industry

By: Chavez H.R. No. 2371

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, James J. Crouch of El Paso is retiring in January 2010, drawing to a close an outstanding career in the air defense industry that has spanned more than six decades; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Crouch studied at Howard University, and after completing basic training for the United States Army, he was stationed at Fort Sill in Oklahoma in 1945; on conclusion of his service in the Korean War, he began studying missile systems; and

WHEREAS, In the 1950s, when Mr. Crouch became involved in air defense artillery, the field was one of the most technical and cutting-edge branches of the military, and the first missiles had just been deployed to counter the threat of jet fighters and bombers; Mr. Crouch seized the opportunity to learn all he could about this new industry, taking courses on the Ajax missile, the Nike Hercules system, and the Hawk missile system, and he went on to serve as an instructor; he also worked on crews in Germany and Florida, where he tracked aircraft en route from Cuba, before retiring in 1974 as ADA chief warrant officer 4 and accepting a civilian position as a software programmer; and

WHEREAS, Later returning to the military sector, Mr. Crouch has served as the deputy director of training instruction for the Air Defense Artillery Center and School at Fort Bliss since 1991; he has been named among the "front four" individuals in the nation's air defense artillery branch, and he received a special tribute in 2009 from Major General Howard Bromberg, the Fort Bliss commander;

and

WHEREAS, Over the course of 64 years in air defense as both a soldier and a civilian, James Crouch has distinguished himself with the utmost dedication and perseverance, and he may indeed reflect with great pride on his many notable achievements and contributions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas Legislature hereby honor James J. Crouch on his exemplary service to his country and to the air defense industry and extend to him sincere best wishes for continued success and happiness; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for Mr. Crouch as an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.

Endowments, Trusts, & Memorial Funds

The University of Texas at El Paso is indebted to the generosity of private citizens for many fine endowments, trusts, and memorial funds. These permanent funds, invested under trusteeship of the Regents of The University of Texas System or held by other trustees, provide scholarships, purchase library books, underwrite important research, and in many ways enrich the educational experience. The University makes grateful acknowledgment for the following permanent funds:

FREDERICK JAMES CROUCH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

--Established in 1988 by Mr. and Mrs. James J. Crouch, in memory of their son, Frederick James Crouch. Frederick Crouch graduated with honors from Burges High School in 1974 and died prematurely in 1985. Income from this endowment will be to award scholarships to outstanding students from Burgess High School, El Paso, Texas, who have also participated in sports and who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Both Mr. and Mrs. Crouch are graduates of The University of Texas at El Paso.

Price's

"GIVE 'EM FIVE"

El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame 51st Annual

A FUND FOR KIDS

Awards Banquet

Tomás Rivera Center
University of Texas at El Paso
Wednesday, May 3rd, 2006

Program for the Price's 2006
El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame Banquet

Welcome . . . . . Steve Hill, Host

Pledge of Allegiance . . . . . Bernard Polk

Invocation . . . . . Pastor David Grousnick
First Christian Church

President's Message . . . . . Thomas Ciaburri

INTRODUCTION OF THE 2006 INDUCTEES

Merrill T. "Skookie" Autry . . . . . Athlete

Alan Culpepper . . . . . Athlete

Scott Warman . . . . . Athlete

Gene R. Calabro . . . . . Administrator

Tony Shaw . . . . . Coach

Thomas "Joe Fan" Ciaburri . . . . . Media

Joe Gomez . . . . . Supporter of Athletics

James J. Crouch . . . . . Official

Pete Paredes, Jr. . . . . Posthumous

DINNER

PRESENTATION OF THE 2006
EL PASO ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Living Athlete . . . . . Merrill T. "Skookie" Autry
Living Athlete . . . . . Alan Culpepper
Living Athlete . . . . . Scott Warman
Administrator . . . . . Gene R. Calabro
Coach . . . . . Tony Shaw
Media . . . . . Thomas "Joe Fan" Ciaburri
Supporter of Athletics . . . . . Joe Gomez
Official . . . . . James J. Crouch

Joe Gomez

Supporter of Athletics

From time to time, in every organization, there comes along a man or woman that proves to be invaluable to that group by successfully performing tasks deemed impossible by the majority of that group's membership.

El Pasoan, Joe Gomez, was invited by President Bush and his wife Laura to be a guest at the White House celebration honoring Coach Don Haskins and the 1966 National Championship basketball team, Texas Western College. So, just how did El Paso sports enthusiast Joe Gomez earn a Presidential Invitation to a State Dinner at the White House? This is his remarkable story that earned him this induction tonight into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame, for the category, "Supporter of Athletics."

Gomez graduated from Burges High School in 1965 and began attending Texas Western College. He was already a devoted sports fan at the age of 18 and the 1966 Miner basketball team put him over the top forever.

Gomez and the rest of El Paso fell in love with Don Haskins' 1966 team because the Miners defeated every squad it played except one. He also became a lifelong friend of Bobby Joe Hill and in fact he and Nolan Richardson did the eulogies at Bobby's funeral. El Paso's sports hysteria quelled slightly when Seattle upset the Miners 72-70 in Seattle in the final game of the regular season. The sports fever reached an all-time high two weeks later when TWC earned a trip to the 1966 Final Four. It was played at the University of Maryland's Cole Field House on the weekend of March 18 and 19.

Gomez was a very astute basketball fan at the age of 18. He began collecting sports memorabilia from the 1966 Final Four. Joe was thrilled when Texas Western outscored #1 ranked Kentucky 72.65 to win the National Title. It was a feeling that has never left him. He also found himself owning a first rate 1966 Final Four collection of photographs.

A few years later Gomez graduated from college and entered the business world. Joe wanted to stay involved in sports so he was asked to join the Sun Carnival basketball committee. The Sun Carnival was already a top-flight holiday basketball tournament during its first decade of operation, but Joe was about to take it to an even higher level. Gomez worked year round as the chairman building relationships with college coaches throughout the United States. He promised visiting coaches great hospitality and a chance to play against a Haskins coached team. The Sun Carnival has consistently attracted top programs to play in its annual December holiday classic thanks to Joe Gomez and his hard working volunteers. Joe made the Sun Carnival Classic one of the top tournaments in the country attracting teams including Georgia Tech, Iowa State, Michigan, Florida, South Carolina, California, SMU, and Purdue.

In the middle of the 1980's Joe along with Bobby Joe Hill started a movement to bring back the 1966 NCAA Championship Texas Western Miner basketball team for a 20 year reunion. El Paso welcomed the 1966 Miners with open arms. Gomez along with Henry and John Silverman presented each member of the Texas Western traveling party with a beautiful championship ring. Then Joe worked closely with the UTEP athletic department on the 25th anniversary reunion to give each member a commemorative watch. Gomez also worked on the 30th reunion of the team as well. A few years ago UTEP president, Dr. Diana Natalicio came up with the idea of a traveling exhibit featuring this historic championship team and she named Gomez as the "Local Curator" for the planning of it. Joe is still active in promoting his beloved Miners. Joe has provided research and memorabilia for such documentaries as HBO's *Real Sports with Bryant Gumble*, *Glory in Black and White* produced by CBS, and *As the Wheels Turned* produced by UTEP. When Jerry Bruckheimer decided to make the Walt Disney movie, *Glory Road*, the costume designer, Alex Friedberg called on Joe to assist her with duplicating the uniforms, letterman's jackets, and even the cheerleader uniforms. He also did a little bit of acting, but unfortunately it ended up on the cutting room floor. Look for Joe on the DVD to be released in June.

He has been a great treasure for this University and the name Joe Gomez is synonymous with the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame inductee category, "Supporter of Athletics."

James J. Crouch

Official

You can judge the success of his remarkable life by his contributions as a basketball and volleyball official. In the El Paso and Fort Bliss area, his career spans decades of leadership roles, presidents of the El Paso Basketball Officials Association and Ft. Bliss Officials Association and Rules Interpreter and Clinician.

His introduction to officiating started in the Moorland Branch of the YMCA in Dallas where he learned that keeping the score book and the clock were tasks just as important as refereeing the game. He continues to ensure that all officials carry this concept with them as they pursue an officiating career. El Paso and Fort Bliss are very fortunate to have Jim Crouch as an official.

His Army training experience set the stage as he provided rules interpretations that were accurate and accepted as the standard for all officials. His fellow basketball officials inducted him into their Hall of Fame with this citation: Jim "Rules" Crouch - "In appreciation of your many years of dedication to basketball officiating in the El Paso Area. Thanks for making us better officials."

The Texas Association of Sports Officials awarded him both a plaque for Distinguished Service to basketball and a watch for his work in volleyball. His selection to officiate the state of Texas - University Interscholastic League (UIL) regional tournaments plus Fifth Army and Fort Bliss championship contests reflect the confidence administrators and coaches have in him. Although he donned the black and white striped official's shirt in Dallas, his Army service took him to Korea, Germany, Florida, Virginia, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri.

Adopting the Tower Principle from his International Association of Approved Basketball Officials (IAABO) training about halfway in his career caused him to develop into a better official. The Tower Principle states that advantage, gained or lost, is the most important approach to successful officiating.

Crouch now joins Paul Lopez, Bert Williams, Yvan Rechy, and Charlie Smith as an inducted member of the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame. These were his teammates from the 1962 Dautrich Jacks, International Softball Congress (ISC). Fastpitch Softball champion team. This squad led by Paul "The Hoss" Lopez and Kenny "The Sidewinder" Wycoff won the ISC Championship in 1961 by beating the Rock Island, Illinois, Hamm's Brewers. The El Paso team returned to Rock Island the next year with Crouch as the centerfielder. His errorless play and .250 batting average helped the Jacks repeat as World Champions. He will always cherish playing for the World Champion Jacks.

A decade later, Jim played centerfield for the Fort Bliss entry in the "5th Army Softball Tournament" and helped Fort Bliss win championships in 1972 and 1973. Although no longer playing softball, he stays in great physical shape playing racquetball and officiating basketball and volleyball.

Some of the top basketball officials from El Paso are now working for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). They have refereed games in the Big 12, Conference USA, Mountain West, Western Athletic Conference, and the Big West. Over the years Jim Crouch tutored these local officials - Mountain West Supervisor of Officials, Bobby Dibler, the WAC's Ronnie Hernandez, Big West's Shawn Lehigh, and El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame's Manny Reynoso.

Last August Jim and Lillian celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. They raised four children and have six grandchildren. You better believe James J. Crouch has received tremendous support from his family to survive a sports schedule of 14,000 games.

Pete Paredes, Jr.

Posthumous

Tonight, the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame honors the life and achievements of Pete Paredes, Jr. He was born in 1912 and was a life-long resident of El Paso until his death in 2004 at the age of 91 years. Pete enriched the lives of anyone that knew him whether it was in the role of athlete, coach, educator, administrator, sports official, civic-minded citizen, or family man. This is his story.

Mr. Paredes graduated from El Paso High School in 1932. He was a two sports star for the Tigers participating in football and boxing. Pete was an offensive guard and one of the toughest linemen in the city. Mr. Paredes was instrumental in leading the Tigers to a district championship when he was a junior and was named to the All-City Football Team in 1932. Pete may even have been a better boxer than he was a football player. He was the captain of the Tiger boxing team for two years from 1931-1932 during which he was a two time runner-up champion for the Southwest Amateur Boxing Association (forerunner of the Golden Gloves) and middle-weight champion in 1932. Mr. Paredes was inducted into the El Paso High Tiger Hall of Fame in 1989 in recognition of his many achievements for that school.

Pete enrolled at the Texas College of Mines after his graduation. He was a three year letterman for the Miners from 1935-1937. Mr. Paredes demonstrated the same toughness in college as he had in high school while playing guard for the Miners. A newspaper article written in 1935 stated that Pete had played every minute of every game during that season. The rest of his football career was equally impressive. He was named Honorable Mention All-Border Conference Team in 1935 and All-Border Conference First Team in 1936. Pete also played against Hardin Simmons in the 1937 Sun Bowl Game.

Mr. Paredes was now ready to embark on a new chapter in his life that would last the next 42 years as coach, educator, and administrator. Pete began his educational career with the El Paso Independent School District in 1940 when he was named assistant football coach and head boxing coach for Bowie High School. His teams at Bowie always demonstrated the same toughness as he had shown during his athletic career. The boxing teams at Bowie were especially rugged as Ray Sanchez, a long-time sportswriter for the *El Paso Herald Post*, wrote in one of his articles a few years back. Pete remained at Bowie from 1940-1949 until a significant milestone occurred. Mr. Paredes was named head football coach and athletic director at the newly opened Jefferson High School and thus became the first Hispanic head football coach in El Paso. Certainly, Pete influenced the lives of anyone who ever played for him.

Mr. Paredes remained in coaching for several more years until he decided to pursue a career in school administration. He rose through the ranks and spent the last seventeen years of his educational career as a principal at Lincoln Elementary School (1965-1967), Alamo Elementary School (1967-1977), and Zavala Elementary School (1977-1982). Pete retired from the EPISD in 1982 after dedicating 42 years of his life to his athletes and students. One can only guess at the number of students whose lives were influenced by the love and devotion of Mr. Paredes.

Pete had such a love for sports and people that he found additional ways to channel his enthusiasm. Boxing still remained an important sport to Mr. Paredes so it was natural for him to become a boxing and wrestling referee during the late 1940s. He was even a boxing and wrestling commissioner. His love of football also presented Mr. Paredes new opportunities. He joined the El Paso Officials Association and did high school football games from 1947-1968. He later moved to the press box where he became an official timekeeper. Many people that attended UTEP football games might remember that Pete was the official timekeeper for that university for over 40 years. Even all of this was not enough to tire out Mr. Paredes. He was a life-long member of the El Maida Shriners and Elks Masonic Lodge. One of his great passions was being a member of the El Maida Drum and Bugle Corps and Oriental Band.

Mr. Paredes is represented at the banquet tonight by his wife of 28 years, Carmen Paredes and son Dr. Sam Paredes. The El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame is proud to induct Mr. Pete Paredes, Jr., for his love and dedication to sports and for the multitude of lives that he touched during his lifetime.

El Paso Times

COLUMNISTS

Wayne Thornton: James Crouch is the man in stripes

Wayne Thornton Columnist

Published 8:46 p.m. MT Jan. 27, 2016 | **Updated 11:19 a.m. MT Jan. 28, 2016**

In many ways, Fort Bliss is an extension of El Paso.

Or is it the other way around?

Fort Bliss and what it represents in shaping our community, our culture, our safety and the lives of those in the Sun City, is a valuable piece in what El Paso is and what it can become.

The many soldiers and families who call Fort Bliss home are important, welcome additions to the area. Although some may spend a brief period of time in our city, the memories will last a lifetime.

The people of El Paso are the kindest you can ever meet. Many of the soldiers are actively involved in the community in making it a special type of partnership unlike any other in the United States.

The 1960s and 1970s saw a majority of those children at Fort Bliss attend Burges High School, making it the largest in the city, if not the state. Over the years, Burges has seen many students of excellence walk its halls.

One particular family features a husband and wife who left an indelible mark in education, community giving and athletics, and have served as a great inspiration to all who know them.

James J. Crouch and Lillian Crouch have been married 60 years. Their children, Michelle Crouch Amdall, Kevin Crouch, Michael Crouch and the oldest, although now deceased, is Frederick Crouch – all graduates of Burges.

Lillian Crouch worked 32 years with the El Paso Independent School District as an administrator supreme. She was a great mentor and role model to hundreds of students, teachers and administrators.

James Crouch served 30 years in the Army before retiring as a CW4 (chief warrant officer),and then followed that up with 32 years as a civilian employee at Fort Bliss before retiring in 2010 as the highest ranking African-American civilian employee in the history of Fort Bliss as a GM-14.

Crouch, who is now 88 years old, spent 62 years of his life in the military. Although he was excellent at his day job, his night job was one of hall-of-fame credentials, and even more so were his athletic accomplishments.

Born in Dallas, Crouch was deployed throughout the world to countries, such as Germany, Japan and Korea, and to states, such as Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and Florida.

Inducted into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame in 2006 in the Referee Category, Crouch should also be considered for the El Paso Softball Hall of Fame. He played center field for the legendary Dautrich Jacks Realtors teams in the early 1960s. The team included Charlie Smith, Kenny Wycoff, Ivan Rechy, Bert Williams and Paul "Hoss" Lopez. That team won the International Softball Congress World Tournament in Rock Island, Ill., in 1961 and 1962. Crouch followed that with a stint with Yarbrough Home Builders in 1963, again qualifying for the ISC World Tournament.

A decade later, Crouch was still active in softball, playing in the Fort Bliss Army Championships and the All-Army Softball Tournament.

But, the area where Crouch is most known is that of a basketball and volleyball official.

He started in Dallas as a teen, keeping the book and the time. He quickly escalated to wearing those famed stripes. He is often called the "rules master" for his interpretation of rules for high school volleyball and basketball by the University Interscholastic League.

The Texas Association of Sports Officials also has honored him several times over the years for being an outstanding sports clinician. He has served as president of both the local basketball and volleyball associations. His mentorship of many young officials is also well-documented.

Crouch refereed more than 14,000 games in his distinguished career, including high school volleyball, girls and boys basketball, Fort Bliss and El Paso Parks and Recreation Department city leagues.

Gene Semko, a member of the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame, attended school with the Crouch children and knew the patriarch from referee circles.

“Jim Crouch would take you under his wing and really show you the ropes," he said. "He was classy, unexcitable and didn’t raise his voice during the game. He is a gold nugget in being very precious in the world of refereeing, and overall just an All-American family.”

Perhaps the most notable of Crouch's achievements was his attention to the area's youth.

Crouch, Bill Mallard and Archie Hartsfield were the caretakers of hundreds of children. They would look out for them when their fathers were deployed. They got them involved in sports or some type of extracurricular activity, and watched over them, keeping them out of harm’s way.

Crouch is experiencing some health issues today, but his spirit, drive and the words of wisdom that he and his wife have given to thousands of young people during their lives will always reign supreme.

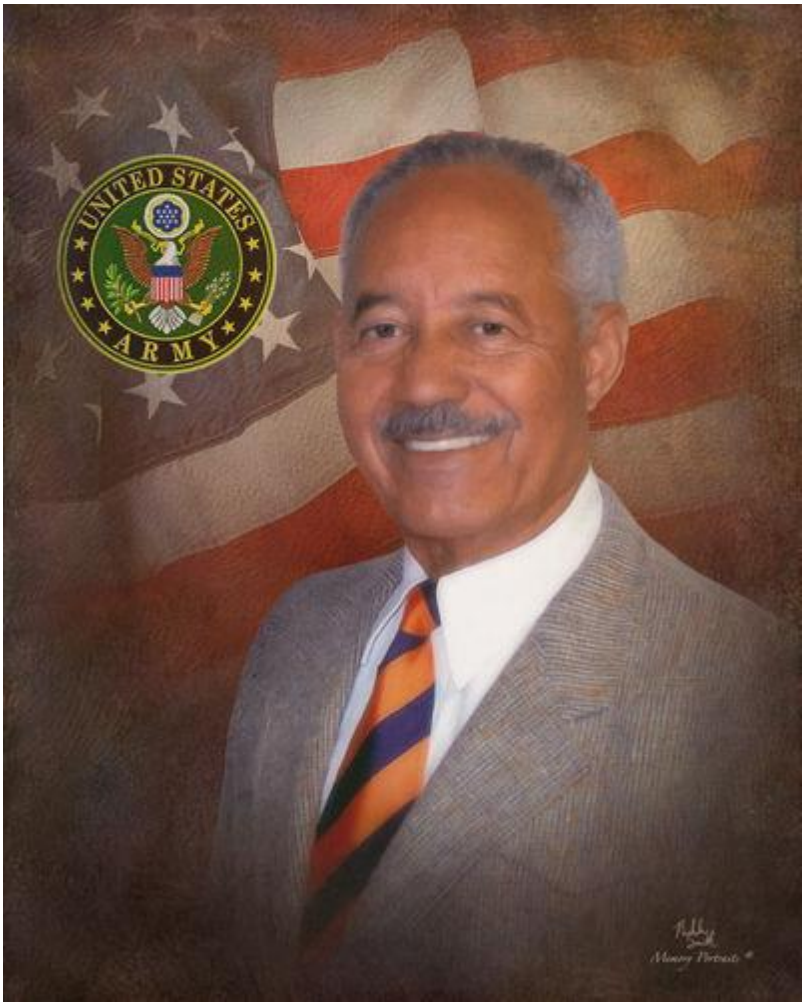
Wayne Thornton is a longtime supporter of community events; 373-6708; wlegend007@gmail.com.

Newspaper Article: Impact Mr. Crouch made on "Greatest Decade" in El Paso Sports

https://www.elpasoinc.com/columns/local_columnists/crouch-helped-launch-el-paso-s-golden-decade/article_be204ed8-09f2-11e8-88c9-fb5a2bd5c96a.html

Crouch helped launch El Paso's golden decade

Ray Sanchez / El Paso Inc.
Feb 5, 2018



James Crouch

Photo provided by Ray Sanchez

Death has taken another member of the team that launched the greatest decade in the history of El Paso sports: Jim Crouch. He passed away on Jan. 15 at the age of 90.

A solid-hitting outfielder, he was a member of the El Paso team that went to Rock Island, Illinois, and won the International Softball Congress world championship not only in 1961 but in 1962 as well.

The team, sponsored by El Paso realtor Jack Dautrich and known locally as the Dautrich Jacks, traveled to the tournament by railroad and was greeted on its return at the El Paso depot with great fanfare.

THE VICTORIES seemed to ignite the entire city with possibilities of what could be accomplished. During the 1960s, which I've called El Paso's golden decade, El Paso not only won two world softball titles but the now-UTEP Miners went on to win a national basketball championship, an NCAA cross country title, two Sun Bowl games against major teams (TCU and University of Mississippi) and Lee Trevino won a U.S. Open. El Paso, suddenly, had become a major player in the country.

CROUCH, AN ARMY veteran who became a solid citizen of El Paso and went on to earn Hall of Fame honors as a referee, has been preceded in death by most members of the team who were either born, raised or made El Paso their homes. They are second baseman Bert Williams, third basemen Gene Stogner, catcher Jack Palmore, outfielder Al Mena and managers Clyde Hooten and Yvan Rechy.

The only El Paso members of the team who I know are still alive are shortstop Johnny Huerta, first baseman Charlie Smith, outfielder Jesse Martinez and utility player Bobby Nunez, who was a solid hitter and could play any position on the team.

Veteran sports journalist, historian and author Ray Sanchez welcomes suggestions for his column. Call (915) 584-0626, email rayf358@yahoo.com or visit raysanchezbooks.com

Ruben Ramirez, El Paso Times photo editor, is the new president of the Hall. I'm sure he'll welcome you with open arms.

Community Leadership, Sport Involvement and Military Awards

JAMES CROUCH OBITUARY/ ACCOMPS-AWARDS

He was also well-known for his omnipresent community involvement, including:

- Cielo Vista Optimist Club: Distinguish President, Board of Directors and Scholarship Chairman
- UTEP: President of the President's Associates, Development Board member, University of Texas System Chancellor's Council member, Alumni Association life member, and scholarship donor
- President, Fort Bliss Athletic Officials Association
- Center Chapel One choir member, 45 years
  Awards and Recognitions

- Member, El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame (Official's Category)

- Member, El Paso 1961 Fast Pitch Softball World Championship Team
- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Sigma Tau Chapter, Colonel Charles Young Distinguished Military Leadership Award
- Certificate of Appreciation from the Air Defense Artillery School, Brigade and Commanders
- General of the Army, Omar N. Bradley Award
- Department of the Army Meritorious Civilian Award

Throughout his remarkable life, Mr. Crouch sought out leadership opportunities to serve Almighty God, his country and community. He was the "wind beneath the wings" for many.

Community Support Letter: Cielo Vista Neighborhood Association

Cielo Vista Neighborhood Association

December 18th. 2023

To whom It may concern,

Re: Support for Renaming Ponder Park to James JimmyCrouch Park

The Cielo Vista Neighborhood Association would like to express its support for the renaming of Ponder Park. located in El Paso's Cielo Vista neighborhood, to James Crouch Park.

It is with great respect and admiration that we reflect upon the life and contributions of Mr. James Crouch. He lived a commendable 90 years, filled with service to our country, our city, and, most importantly, to its people. His military service during World War II and the Korean War stands as a testament to his bravery and dedication to our nation. Moreover, his 63 years of federal service, especially his significant contributions as the highest-ranking African American civilian employee in the history of Fort Bliss, highlight his commitment to El Paso and its community.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Mr. Crouch's impact as a mentor to the youth of El Paso is undeniable. As noted by Wayne Thornton, Public Relations Director of the El Paso Parks and Recreation department, Mr. Crouch was a father figure to many, guiding and nurturing them during the vulnerable phases of their lives

His love for sports and his contribution to the El Paso athletic community is evident from his inductions into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame and the El Paso Softball Hall of Fame. Yet, it was not just about the games but the people involved. He was known as a generous man, always ready to uplift someone when they were down.

Given these immense contributions and the indelible mark Mr. Crouch has left on the El Paso community, it is fitting that Ponder Park, a gathering place for families and youth, bear his name. It would stand as a testament to his legacy, reminding future generations of the values of respect, truth, love, and service that he so ardently upheld.

After a recent vote amongst our members, the Cielo Vista Neighborhood Association unanimously approved to support this renaming initiative. We believe that James "Jimmy" Crouch Park will serve as a beacon of inspiration for all who visit and a place where his spirit will forever resonate.

Thank you for considering our support in this noble endeavor. We are hopeful that the park's renaming will reflect the legacy of a true El Pasoan hero.

Sincerely,

Mike Adjemian
President
Cielo Vista Neighborhood Association

Phone (915) 490.6929 **Email** elpasocvna915@gmail.com **Website** www.ep-cvna.org **Mail** PO Box 971884, El Paso TX 79997

THE
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
SYSTEM

CHANCELLOR'S
COUNCIL

Mr. and Mrs.
James J. Crouch

MEMBERS

In recognition of your
generous contributions towards
academic excellence

July 1993

Chancellor

Dautrich Jacks
James J. Crouch
Hall of Fame Inductee
2019

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition

Presented to:

James J. Crouch

for his unwavering service to our nation.

Friday, January 26, 2018

DATE

Beto O'Rourke

MEMBER OF CONGRESS