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.

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	, 2024.		
	CITY OF EL PASO:		
A MINING COM	Oscar Leeser Mayor		
ATTEST:			
Laura D. Prine City Clerk			
APPROVED AS TO FORM:	APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:		
Karla Sasna			
Karla A. Saenz	Pablo Caballero, Interim Director		
Assistant City Attorney	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 Ad	200		City: El Paso	Zip: 79902
Home Pho	100		Cell Phon	
Email Add				
		Proposed Nan	ne / Change	The Time
Park/Facili	ity Location/Address:	7500 W H Burge	es Dr, El Paso, TX 799	25
	me of Park or Facility:	Ponder Park		□ Not Applicable
Suggested	Name:James "J	immy" Crouch Park		
Category:				
X	Outstanding Individua	al(s)		
	-		een made by such individual(s)	
			ity's park and recreation systen	7
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G	Historical Event, Pers		name that gives a particular ide	entity to a neighborhood
La			nders, other historical figures o	or local landmarks
		cal Feature to the area	nders, other materical ngares (n lova landmands
			ological feature in the surroundi	ng area.
Acknowledges a prominent or unique natural or geological feature in the surrounding area. Benefit/Organizat ion Acknowledgement				
		s the significant benefit of a	donation	
	Other			
	Describe:			
	s			
PLEA	SE DO NOT WRITE	E IN THIS AREA	Date Received at PARD	
	PARKS AND REC		Date District Rep. Notifie	
			Date of Committee Meeti	ing:
	STAFF ON	LY	Date of PRAB Meeting:	
Date			Date of City Council Med	eting:



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.

Citizen Support

James "Jimmy" Crouch Park Suggested Name:

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.

Signature Name **Address Phone Number**

	Suggested Name:	James "Jimmy" Crouch					E 144
	List eligibile members of the public who support the nomination: Include name, address, telephone number and signature of fifty (50) individuals lages 18 years or older who live within a mile radius of the park facility.						
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Citizen Support

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James "Jimmy" Crouch Park Suggested Name: 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. **Phone Number** Address Name Signature PARK NAMING/CHANGING Citizen Support BARBACA BANUELOS



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

By: Chavez H.R. No. 2371

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, James J. Crouch of El Paso is retiring in January 1 2 2010, drawing to a close an outstanding career in the air defense 3 industry that has spanned more than six decades; and WHEREAS, Mr. Crouch studied at Howard University, and after 4 5 completing basic training for the United States Army, he was stationed at Fort Sill in Oklahoma in 1945; on conclusion of his 6 service in the Korean War, he began studying missile systems; and 7 WHEREAS, In the 1950s, when Mr. Crouch became involved in air 8 defense artillery, the field was one of the most technical and 9 cutting-edge branches of the military, and the first missiles had 10 11 just been deployed to counter the threat of jet fighters and 12 bombers; Mr. Crouch seized the opportunity to learn all he could about this new industry, taking courses on the Ajax missile, the 13 14 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 15 Florida, where he tracked aircraft en route from Cuba, before 16 retiring in 1974 as ADA chief warrant officer 4 and accepting a 17 civilian position as a software programmer; and 18 WHEREAS, Later returning to the military sector, Mr. Crouch 19 has served as the deputy director of training instruction for the 20 21 Air Defense Artillery Center and School at Fort Bliss since 1991; he has been named among the "front four" individuals in the nation's 22 23 air defense artillery branch, and he received a special tribute in 2009 from Major General Howard Bromberg, the Fort Bliss commander; 24

H.R. No. 2371

- 1 and
- 2 WHEREAS, Over the course of 64 years in air defense as both a
- 3 soldier and a civilian, James Crouch has distinguished himself with
- 4 the utmost dedication and perseverance, and he may indeed reflect
- 5 with great pride on his many notable achievements and
- 6 contributions; now, therefore, be it
- 7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas
- 8 Legislature hereby honor James J. Crouch on his exemplary service
- 9 to his country and to the air defense industry and extend to him
- 10 sincere best wishes for continued success and happiness; and, be it
- 11 further
- 12 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
- 13 prepared for Mr. Crouch as an expression of high regard by the Texas
- 14 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.



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

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



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

Cos Me Sur Off ~>>>6°

Joe Gomez

Supporter of Athletics



From time to time, in every organization. there comes along a man or woman that 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 Joc Gomez carn 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 college and entered the business world. Joe worked closely with the UTEP athletic School in 1965 and began attending Texas wanted to stay involved in sports so he was department on the 25th anniversary reunion to 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 proves to be 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 Minors 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. Joc 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

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. Joc made the Sun Carnival Classic one of the top tournaments in the country attracting teams including Georgia Tech, lowa State, Michigan, Florida, South Carolina, Califonia, 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 rcunion. 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 of Fame inductee category, "Supporter of beautiful championship ring. Then Joe

eive 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 IIBO's Real Sports with Bryant Gunble, 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 movic, 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 IIail Athletics."

James J. Crouch

Official



You can udge the by his contributions as a 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

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

officiating career. El Paso and Fort Bliss are very fortunate to have Jim Crouch as an

His Army training experience set the stage as he provided rules interpretations success of his that were accurate and accremarkable life standard for all officials. that were accurate and accepted as the His fellow basketball officials inducted him into their Hall of Fame with this citation: Jim basketball and "Rules" Crouch - "In appreciation of your volley ball many years of dedication to basketball official. In the El Paso and Fort 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. 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 important as refereeing the game. He Dallas, his Army service took him to continues to ensure that all officials carry Korea, Germany, Florida, Virginia, this concept with them as they pursue an Kansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri.

Adopting the Tower Principle from his International Association of Approved Bliss win championships in 1972 and 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 tcam returned to Rock Island the next year with Crouch as the conterfielder. 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 1973 Although no longer playing softball, he stays in great physical shape playing racquetball and officiating basketballand 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 futored these local officials - Mountain West Supervisor of Officials, Bobby Dibler, the WAC's Ronnie Hernandez, Big West's Shawn Lehigh, and El Paso Athletic IIall 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



Hall of Fame honors the life Paredes, Jr. He was born in 1912 and was a lifc-long resident of El Paso until his

death in 2004 at the age of 91 years. Petc 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.

1r. Paredes graduated from El Paso 1 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 Alleven have been a better boxer than he was a District in 1940 when he was named and devotion of Mr. Paredes.

football player. He was the captain of the Tiger boxing team for two years from 1931-1932 during which he was a two time Tonight, the runner-up champion for the Southwest El Paso Athletic Amateur Boxing Association (forerunner Hall of Fame of the Golden Gloves) and middle-weight honors the life champion in 1932. Mr. Paredes was and achieve- inducted into the El Paso High Tiger Hall ments of Pete 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 City Football Team in 1932. Pete may career with the El Paso Independent School whose lives were influenced by the love multitude of lives that he touched during

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 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 and dedication to sports and for the

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 from 1940-1949 until a significant opportunities. He joined the El Paso milestone occurred. Mr. Paredes was Officials Association and did high school named head football coach and athletic football games from 1947-1968. He later director at the newly opened Jefferson moved to the press box where he became High School and thus became the first an official timekeeper. Many people that Hispanic head football coach in El Paso. attended UTEP football games might Certainly, Pete influenced the lives of 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. Parcdes. 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

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.

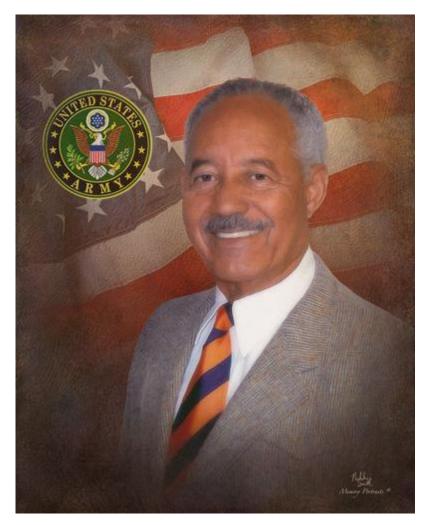
Crouch is experiencing some health issues today, but his spirit, drive and the words of wisdom that he and his wife have given to thousands of young people during their lives will always reign supreme.

Wayne Thornton is a longtime supporter of community events; 373-6708; wlegendoo7@gmail.com.

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 EI 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 fives

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



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



Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition Presented to:

James J. Crouch

for his unwavering service to our nation.

Friday, January 26, 2018

DATE

Beto O'Rourhe

MEMBER OF CONGRESS