

IN THE COUNTY LEGISLATURE OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI

A RESOLUTION honoring the life and achievements of Irene Hernández Ruiz.

RESOLUTION NO. 21403, September 25, 2023

INTRODUCED BY Manuel Abarca IV, County Legislator

WHEREAS, Irene Hernández Ruiz, a dedicated educator, librarian, and advocate, passed away on September 3, 2023, leaving a legacy of devotion and service to the residents of the West Side; and,

WHEREAS, Irene Ruiz was born on April 9, 1920, in San Antonio, Texas, and from an early age she exhibited exceptional linguistic skills, proficient in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, using her talents to serve as a translator and phone monitor for the U.S. Office of Censorship during World War II; and,

WHEREAS, Irene Ruiz's unwavering commitment to education led her to earn a teaching certificate from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, and she, along with her husband Francisco Ruiz, brought their passion for learning to the classrooms of Kansas City in the 1960s, where she taught Spanish and social studies and Francisco oversaw the district's language programs; and,

WHEREAS, in 1969, Irene Ruiz enrolled at Emporia State College to pursue library studies and, in 1976, she became a full-time librarian for the Kansas City Public Library's West Branch; and,

WHEREAS, throughout her twenty-year tenure with the library, Irene Ruiz became known for her tireless efforts to preserve and promote the Hispanic heritage of Kansas City; and,

WHEREAS, Irene Ruiz played an instrumental role in creating one the best Spanish-language collections at the library and preserved the cultural and rich history of the community through oral history interviews with longtime residents, many of whom had lost family records in the 1951 Kansas City flood; and,

WHEREAS, Irene Ruiz's dedication and hard work contributed significantly to the cultural richness of the West Side neighborhood, inspiring the community to rename the library branch in her honor; and,

WHEREAS, the Irene H. Ruiz Biblioteca de las Americas is the only facility in the Kansas City Public Library system named after a former employee, a testament to her enduring impact on the community she served; and,

WHEREAS, Irene Ruiz's passing at the age of 102 leaves a void in the hearts of those who knew and admired her, but her memory will forever be enshrined in the collections, stories, and lives she touched; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the County Legislature of Jackson County, Missouri that the Legislature honors Irene Hernández Ruiz, recognizing her as a pillar of the West Side community and a cherished advocate for the Hispanic population of Kansas City.

Effective Date: This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon its passage by a majority of the Legislature.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Bryan O. Wonsky
County Counselor

Certificate of Passage

I hereby certify that the attached resolution, Resolution No. 21403 of September 25, 2023, was duly passed on September 25, 2023 by the Jackson County Legislature. The votes thereon were as follows:

Yeas 8

Nays 0

Abstaining 0

Absent 1

9.25.2023
Date

Mary Jo Spino
Mary Jo Spino, Clerk of Legislature