

RESPECT BY THE YARDS

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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Menini calls for stadium to be named after educator, coach

The Gallup-McKinley County Board of Education unanimously agreed Nov. 14 to rename Public

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School Stadium Angelo DiPaolo Stadium. The action took place at the regular school board meeting and was not met with opposition from members of the community.

The matter was brought up by board member and retired educator Joe Menini. The vote called for changing the wait time from 10 to two years when it comes to name changes and buildings. The name change initiative includes a lengthy process, and Monday's vote set into motion the plan to rename PSS.

"He was a pillar of the community," Menini said. "I don't know anyone more deserving who served the community like [Angelo DiPaolo] did."

Each of the board members agreed to the DiPaolo name change, and agreed that the policy of waiting 10 years needed to be changed. "Who knows what can happen if you actually wait that long? Menini said. "Sometimes, people forget who you're referring to."

School Board Vice President Kevin Mitchell said 10 years is a long to wait. "Ten [years] seems like a long time," Mitchell said. "I like the idea."

School Board President Prescilla Manuelito was in complete agreement with the name change impetus. Manuelito suggested that a committee should be formed and undertake a plan of action while working alongside Superintendent Frank Chiapetti.

"I think [two years] is a good number to change to," Manuelito said. "We can appoint a committee to assist the Superintendent in this."

That committee consists of Menini and Board Member Lynn Huenemann. Located on South Grandview Drive and the playing place for the football and soccer teams at Gallup and Miyamura high schools, PSS, owned by the Gallup-McKinley County School District for several years, is in Huenemann's district. Huenemann did not object to the name change and offered Menini support in moving the idea forward.

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Menini worked with DiPaolo when the two were GMCS employees. He said he got the name change idea from a *Gallup Sun* article written about a month ago about the late Gallup City Councilor Cecil Garcia.

Last year, the Gallup City Council renamed the City Fitness Center the Cecil Garcia Fitness Center. The council erected a bronze memorial at the Old Zuni Road facility a few weeks ago to honor the fitness buff.

Menini said the name change idea would be put on the Dec. 5 Board of Education meeting agenda and from there move to its next phase. He said there is still some investigatory work to do, saying everything must be done legally and the right way.

“There is still some stuff yet to be done,” Menini said of the process. “Between now and the next meeting, things should be further along than what they are now.”

This vote is not Menini’s first name change recommendation for a public building. About four years ago, Menini addressed the Gallup City Council and asked that the newly built \$1.4 million East Side Fire Station be renamed in honor of a Menini family member.

The Gallup Council welcomed the idea at the time and city officials have said the name change recommendation remains on the table. Right now though, the station, which is located in the Indian Hills neighborhood, is named the East Side Fire Station.

HONORING DIPAOLO

DiPaolo was not a stranger to the board members and Menini, who knew DiPaolo for close to 50 years, didn’t have to go into long discourses about the former educator.

A Gallup native, DiPaolo was a career educator. Over the course of his 39-year career at Gallup-McKinley County Schools, Gallup Catholic High School and the Window Rock Unified

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School District, he served as a teacher, administrator, coach and athletic director. DiPaolo was a long-time member of Gallup's Rotary Club.

"I think it's a wonderful honor," Diane DiPaolo widow of Angelo DiPaolo said, of the plans to rename the stadium. "I found out about the renaming from Facebook and I myself and our entire family are very appreciative of Joe Menini and the Gallup-McKinley County School district. Angelo was very passionate about Public School Stadium. He was always making sure it was in good condition. Sports and news were his passions."

DiPaolo died in 2014 in San Antonio, Texas, of brain cancer. He was 66 years old. He was posthumously inducted into the New Mexico Activities Association Hall of Fame in 2015.

By Bernie Dotson

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