

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 124

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas is pleased to recognize William Ruiz, Jr., who is retiring from his position with El Paso High School after 27 years of outstanding service; and

WHEREAS, An El Paso native, Junior Ruiz was widely recognized in his youth for his exceptional athletic talents; a graduate of El Paso High School, he excelled in both basketball and football and made All-District teams for both sports; and

WHEREAS, He attended Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico, on a football scholarship and earned a master's degree in education from The University of Texas at El Paso; and

WHEREAS, He began a 42-year career as a teacher and coach when he joined Houston Elementary School in 1963; he was then employed at several high schools before beginning his long tenure with El Paso High School in 1978; in addition to teaching courses in physical science, biology, health, and chemistry, Coach Ruiz has always been a strong advocate for young people; a highly respected educator, he was appointed by the State Board of Education to serve on The Commission for Teacher Standards from 1996 to 1999; and

WHEREAS, As a teacher and a coach, he encouraged many young people to reach for higher goals; as a civic leader in El Paso, Junior Ruiz has long been known for his dedication to service and his reliability, and to those who have the good fortune to know him personally, he is a true and loyal friend; the following are the words of some who know him best:

Junior Ruiz is a gentle and kind soul who goes to battle unwillingly. But when he goes to battle, he is fierce and loyal, and he knows that the battle is only won when we all win.

Susie Byrd

It is difficult to put in a few words a lifetime of fears, tears, births, deaths, divorces, joys, and laughter. Junior has been a close friend almost from the day we met. We met at Morehead Grade School in the third grade. He was never, ever, judgmental. Whatever my problem was, whatever was asked of him, he never questioned, and the words "no" or "cannot" were not part of his vocabulary. A close friend and confidant who has a great love of friends and family, Junior is a very unique individual, a citizen of the world.

Herbie

Junior es el mero mero. Dad, granddad, teacher, friend to all, he is kind and gentle and fun, but when it's time to fight, he is the one you want.

Eliot Shapleigh

William Ruiz, Jr., "Junior" to everyone, is a son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, teacher, mentor, athlete, communitarian, and friend. Many of us are some of these; few of us excel in even a few of these roles; Junior is the model. Junior's concern for his fellow man is genuine and is so passionate and unselfish that he brings out the best in each of us. We all owe Junior our gratitude for his devotion and friendship and for a lifetime of service. I feel privileged and humbled to have known Junior since I was a boy. Junior is the gold standard.

Raymond C. Caballero

Junior Ruiz is a legend. I am proud to call Junior and Tessa, his wife of many years, my friends. I cannot remember ever hearing one negative thing about this man. He is selfless. He and Tessa have raised two outstanding daughters, who are now raising their own fine families. One of the best character traits I can think of is the ability to maintain friendships from every phase of one's life, and Junior Ruiz is still close friends to people he started school with. And of those of us who didn't know him until much later, he just adds us to his wide circle of friends. He has never forgotten where he came from, yet he has inspired literally scores of students to aim high and achieve a higher education.

Liz Rogers

Junior Ruiz is an outstanding El Pasoan who has selflessly devoted his life to improving the lives of others. Countless El Pasoans have benefitted from Junior's community involvement.

Whether it has been by giving advice on the basketball court, lessons in the classroom, or performing community service, Junior has helped to make El Paso the special place that it is.

Steve Ortega

Loyal friend, dedicated teacher, loving husband and father, and ethical leader are all phrases that help define this man who somehow manages to be gentle and strong at the same time.

Susan Urbietta

Junior Ruiz is a selfless El Pasoan who is always looking for ways to improve his community. He consistently gives of his time and energy to involve himself in the civic life of El Paso. He does so in order to improve the lives of his family and everyone in the community. He never asks for recognition; he never asks for compensation; and when he has completed a task, he looks for a new one. If everyone in the world were as thoughtful, kind, optimistic, and deeply caring as he is, what a beautiful, perfect world it would be!

Veronica Escobar

Tucked in an old glass-enclosed frame, hanging from a wall on the second floor of the historic El Paso High School building is an archive that not many know about or even pay much attention to anymore. Listed are the El Paso High School career football records. At the top of one list reads the name Junior Ruiz, still, after nearly a half century, he was the greatest quarterback who ever played for the school. Normally, I wouldn't make note of this, but what struck me was that Junior Ruiz has never mentioned this. I have only known him for a few years and just recently became aware of his incredible accomplishments. A conversation about Junior doesn't go by without my learning some other noteworthy thing about him. Because he is a humble man and would never be the one to boast or talk about himself, the conversation is always steered toward you and your family and the kids. I know him as the vice chair of the Housing Authority of El Paso. Others know him as the great educator who inspired them. Still others may know him as the wise coach molded right from the "Hank Rockwell" character made famous in the Chip Hilton Sports Stories.

A person with greater moral energy I have not met. Boiling at the edge of our city's consciousness is the search for leaders who represent honesty and integrity and all that is good about living here in this wonderful city. Look no further--we have found that person in Junior Ruiz.

Steve Yellen

My dad taught us lessons throughout our entire lives, lessons that have become rules of thumb to live my life by, such as the following:

Be a good listener;
Invest yourself in your city and home;
Be the kind of friend you would like to have;
Dare to make a difference in whatever you can;
Take your right to vote seriously and show up
at the polls;
Paying taxes is a privilege; and
Education is the greatest gift you can give
yourself.

I am a better person for having had those values instilled in my life, and I strive to pass on the same legacy to my own children.

Gina Carameros

He's our hero! He loves family, friends, and El Paso!

Wife

Junior Ruiz is one of the most committed community leaders that I've met in El Paso. His agenda is El Paso and making this a better community, and he will instantly claim you as a friend and help shoulder your burden should he see you working for El Paso's betterment. His energy, passion, enthusiasm, and large heart make him one of El Paso's true treasures.

Beto O'Rourke

Though my Daddy has retired from his job as a public school teacher, he has not retired from his role as my teacher, my mentor, my hero.

Daddy is my teacher who taught me to have courage--the courage to stand up for what is right, the courage to speak up when something is wrong, and the courage to persevere when standing up and speaking up are not enough.

Daddy is my mentor who mentored me on how to be a good citizen, how to become actively engaged in the policy decisions that impact the lives of the people in my community, and how to be a force for positive change in the world around me.

Daddy is my hero because after he retires as a public school teacher, he will still be a teacher and mentor to the many students he has taught, to the many athletes he has coached, to his family, and to his eldest daughter, who loves him very much.

Vanessa Ruiz Boling

WHEREAS, Educator, coach, civic leader, role model, friend, loving husband, and doting father, Junior Ruiz is an inspiration to all who know him; he is beloved and respected by his students and his colleagues in education, and his presence at El Paso High School will be greatly missed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 79th Legislature, 2nd Called Session, hereby pay tribute to William Ruiz, Jr., a treasured citizen of the City of El Paso and our state, and commend him for an exemplary career in the field of education and for his invaluable contributions to El Paso High School; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for him as an expression of high regard from the Texas Senate.

Shapleigh

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on August 19, 2005.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate