



## **PRESS RELEASE – ORANGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

For immediate release

Information: Superintendent's Office (714) 628-4487

### **El Modena Civil Rights Hero Celebrated**

ORANGE, CA (February 3, 2012) – El Modena High School will host the Lorenzo A. Ramirez Library Dedication Ceremony at 10:00 AM on March 2, 2012. The public is invited to attend.

Lorenzo A. Ramirez, former longtime resident of the El Modena community in Orange, will be celebrated for his efforts to desegregate schools in the community.

On March 2, 1945, Ramirez joined Thomas Estrada, William Guzman, Frank Palomillo, and Gonzalo Mendez in a Los Angeles County Superior Court class-action lawsuit suing the El Modena, Santa Ana, Garden Grove, and Westminster School Districts, respectively, for discrimination against Mexican students.

Their case, *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District et al.*, led directly to legislation that ended segregation in public schools across the State of California. The court's decision also had a powerful impact upon the 1954 United States Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* that "separate education facilities are inherently unequal" and the subsequent desegregation of schools across the country.

El Modena High School Principal John Briquet stated, "We are both proud and excited to dedicate our library in Lorenzo Ramirez's name. He is a hometown hero and a tremendous role model whose courage and conviction helped pave the way for equity in public education here in El Modena and far beyond."

Orange Unified School District's Board of Education voted to rename the El Modena High School Library in honor of Ramirez at the May 12, 2011 Board of Education meeting. The Ramirez Family had previously been honored for their "significant and lasting contribution to the quality of education in Orange, California and across the nation" at a Board meeting last March.

*The Orange Unified School District is located at 1401 North Handy Street in Orange, CA*

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