



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 2013) - El Modena High School is proud to celebrate the one year anniversary of the Lorenzo A. Ramirez Library. During the first week of March, Santiago Middle School and Esplanade Elementary School will participate in tours of the library and listen to the history regarding the Lorenzo A. Ramirez legacy.

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

On March 2, 1945, Ramirez joined Thomas Estrada, William Guzman, Frank Palomino, 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.

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

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