



City of Carson Report to Mayor and City Council

April 1, 2014
New Business Consent

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON EFFORTS TO RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF FARM
LABOR LEADER LARRY ITLIONG**

Submitted by Cedric L. Hicks, Sr.
Director of Community Services

Approved by Jacquelyn Acosta
Acting City Manager

I. SUMMARY

This item is on the agenda at the request of *Mayor Pro Tem* Santarina.

On October 5, 2010, the City of Carson approved Resolution No. 10-108 that established October 25 as Larry Itliong Day (Exhibit No. 1), the first such recognition of the contributions of this leader in the farm labor movement. Since then, many other agencies and organizations have joined this effort. This report provides a summary of what has been done to recognize the work and legacy of Larry Itliong since the City passed its resolution.

II. RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE and FILE report.

III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE another action the City Council deems appropriate.

IV. BACKGROUND

Larry Dulay Itliong was born on October 20, 1913, in the Pangasinan Province of the Philippines. One of six children of Artemio and Francesca Itliong, he only had a sixth-grade education. In 1929, at the age of 15, he immigrated to the United States, landing first in Alaska where he helped found the Alaska Cannery Workers Union. The following year he assisted in obtaining a contract that gave workers an eight-hour work day, with overtime. He later worked as a farm worker in Washington and throughout California. During World War II, Itliong served on a US Army transport ship as a messman. After the war, he settled in Stockton, California.

From 1948 to 1955, Itliong was involved in various labor and union activities, including the asparagus strike of 1948, which was the first major agricultural strike after World War II. In 1956, Itliong founded the Filipino Farm Labor Union in Stockton, California. By 1965, he was leading the AFL-CIO union and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, which was mostly comprised of Filipinos who had arrived in the United States in the 1930s.

14

On May 3, 1965, the Committee voted to strike against Coachella Valley grape growers. The strike ended with the workers receiving higher wages. In light of its success, on September 8, 1965, the Committee voted to strike against grape growers in Delano, California. Eight days later, the National Farm Workers Association, led by Cesar Chavez, joined the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee on the picket lines. The two groups later merged to become the United Farm Workers of America (UFW). The strike eventually grew to include thousands of farm workers, and ultimately lead to a nation-wide grape boycott. The strike would last 5 years and is now considered a turning point in the farm labor movement.

In 1970, Itliong was elected vice-president of the UFW, but resigned a year later over disagreements with the governing board of the union. Not long afterward he founded and became president of the Filipino American Political Association (FAPA), the first national political Filipino American organization.

For the remaining years of his life, Itliong continued to support and remain active in the organized labor movement. He also assisted retired Filipino farm workers living in Delano, California; ultimately helping to build a retirement facility called the Paolo Agbayani Village. After a long life committed to improving the lives of not only farm workers but all workers, Larry Dulay Itliong passed away on February 8, 1977, in Delano, California.

Although the history of the farm labor movement has been largely silent to the contributions of Filipino Americans like Larry Itliong, recent efforts to bring attention to his work have born considerable fruit. In September 2010, Itliong was included in a mural at California State University, Dominguez Hills to celebrate the diversity of the university and the local area, as well as the historical social accomplishments that have contributed to a more inclusive and multicultural America. One month later, the City of Carson became the first city to recognize Larry Itliong Day in the country. In 2011, the County of Los Angeles followed suit by also recognizing October 25 as Larry Itliong Day.

The movement to honor Itliong's legacy made significant strides last year. In May, the New Haven School District in Union City, California, renamed Alvarado Middle School the Itliong-Vera Cruz Middle School in honor of Larry Itliong and fellow labor leader Philip Vera Cruz. It is the first school in the United States named after Filipino Americans. The San Diego School District approved a resolution designating October 25 as Larry Itliong Day, and the Cities of Seattle, Tacoma, Yakima, and Wapato in Washington State also passed resolutions honoring his legacy. In October, the California State Assembly passed and Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill 123 that required all schools in California to include the contributions of Filipino Americans to its instruction on the Farm Labor Movement. The year culminated with the opening of the Larry

Itliong Village, in Delano, California, a development that provides 44 units of affordable housing and community space for recreational activities and social service programs.

There are currently plans for other cities to recognize Larry Itliong in communities with large Filipino populations. In addition, it is hoped that the State of California will have its own Larry Itliong Day, and the United States will authorize a national day of remembrance.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

VI. EXHIBITS

- 1. Resolution No. 10-108. (pgs. 4-6)

Prepared by: Luchie S. Magante, Sr. Administrative Analyst

Document 1

TO: Rev02-24-2014

Reviewed by:

City Clerk	City Treasurer
Administrative Services	Public Works
Community Development	Community Services

Action taken by City Council

Date _____ Action _____

RESOLUTION NO. 10-108

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA, ESTABLISHING OCTOBER 25, 2010 AS LARRY ITLIONG DAY IN HONOR OF HIS LIFE'S WORK AND LEGACY TO PROMOTE AND FIGHT FOR THE WELL BEING OF ALL OF CALIFORNIA'S FARM WORKERS

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong was born October 25, 1913, at St. Nicholas, Pangasinan, son of Artemio and Francesca Itliong; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong had been organizing immigrant farm workers and cannery workers for over 30 years; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong arrived in the USA in 1929, having never slept in a bed or used a toilet. A year later, he joined striking lettuce pickers in Washington; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong helped establish the Alaska Cannery Workers Union in the 1930s, when the fish arrived, working for two to three days around the clock, he helped get a contract that called for eight-hour days plus overtime; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong was given an Honorable Discharge from the United States Army, Pvt. Co. "K" 2nd Filipino Infantry, May 6th 1943, having served 7 years and 27 days; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong served as vice president of the Cannery Workers Union in Seattle, Washington, and in 1953 still found time to help orchestrate an asparagus strike in Stockton, California; and

WHEREAS, in 1956, Larry Itliong led and organized the Filipino Farm Labor Union, which received the support from American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO); and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong was an articulate orator who spoke nine Philippine dialects, and was the most persuasive, giving the Manongs a lot of courage, he would say, "Let's go, don't be scared, I will be in the front - just follow me"; and

WHEREAS, in 1965, Larry Itliong led a Filipino strike of Coachella Valley grape growers that resulted in higher pay. Emboldened by the success of the Coachella strike, they decided to strike in Delano, where most table grapes are grown; and

WHEREAS, on September 8, 1965 Larry Itliong led a walkout of 1,500 Filipino grape-pickers and began the Great Delano Grape Strike to protest low wages and miserable working conditions, and to ask for basic needs like water and portable toilets; and

Exhibit 1



WHEREAS, Larry Itliong's great contribution was crossing racial barriers, by asking Cesar Chavez to join the strike, "Cesar said no, he was not ready", Itliong later asked him again and Cesar called for a meeting of his union and took a vote. On September 16, 1965 Chavez's union members voted overwhelmingly to strike with Itliong; and

WHEREAS, in December 1965, United Auto Workers President Walter Reuther called for a national boycott against Delano grape products and gave the strikers \$5,000.00 a month. Clergy backed the boycott, and a Harris poll showed that 17 million people stopped buying table grapes; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong's union AWOC and Cesar Chavez's union NFWA merged on August 22, 1966 and became the United Farm Worker Organizing Committee (UFWOC) eventually becoming the United Farm Workers of America (UFW); and

WHEREAS, in July 1970, the Delano Grape Strike finally ended, with wage increases, a medical plan for farm workers, the set up of five clinics, a day care center and a school; and

WHEREAS, in 1970, Larry Itliong founded and became the president of the Filipino American Political Association (FAPA) the first national political Filipino-American organization to form a crucial alliance between Filipino professionals with active chapters in 30 cities throughout the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong oversaw the creation of Agbayani Village, a center for retired Filipino farm workers in Delano; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong, served as a consultant to the Farm Labor Legislative Task Force; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong, in 1971 was the first Filipino to run for a political office; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong, was the first Filipino elected Delegate of the Democratic Party Convention to represent the State of California in 1972; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong served on the Advisory Board of the North Kern-Tulare Filipino Senior Citizens Club; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong served as a National Board Member of the Pacific - Asian Coalition; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong, like thousands of other migrants, laid railroad track, harvested sugar beets in Montana and South Dakota, worked in canneries from San Pedro to Alaska, and picked produce from Canada to the Mexican border. Whenever Filipinos had a problem, the 5-foot 5-inch organizer, cigar in hand, spoke up for them; and

WHEREAS, after leaving the UFW, Larry Itliong went to Brazil and Chile to fight against injustice and abuse to help organize farm workers; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong, a great organizer, leader, friend, husband and a great father be recognized on the day of his birth, a true Filipino Hero, a true American Hero, passed away February 8, 1977; and

[MORE]



WHEREAS, the life and legacy of Larry Itliong can be seen in the upcoming documentary, "The Delano Manongs: Forgotten Heroes of the UFW," a film which follows the life of Larry Itliong and the Original Strikers directed by Northern California Emmy-award winning filmmaker Marissa Aroy.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the city of Carson urges all residents to celebrate the life of Larry Itliong and all his contributions and efforts engaging in service, events, and actions representative by his legacy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that October 25, 2010, shall be observed as LARRY ITLIONG DAY in the city of Carson, and the city of Carson honors his life's work and legacy to promote and fight for the well being of all of California's Farm Workers.

PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED this 5th day of October, 2010.

Jim Dear
Mayor Jim Dear

ATTEST:

Helen S. Kawagoe
City Clerk Helen S. Kawagoe

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

W. Wyzal
City Attorney

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES) ss.
CITY OF CARSON)

I, Helen S. Kawagoe, City Clerk of the City of Carson, California, do hereby certify that the whole number of members of the City Council is five; that the foregoing resolution, being Resolution No. 10-108 was duly and regularly adopted by said Council at a regular meeting duly and regularly held on the 5th day of October, 2010, and that the same was passed and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Mayor Dear, Santarina, Gipson, Davis-Holmes and Ruiz-Raber
NOES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None
ABSTAIN: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None
ABSENT: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None

Helen S. Kawagoe
City Clerk Helen S. Kawagoe

