



RIALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
NAMESAKE
HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE

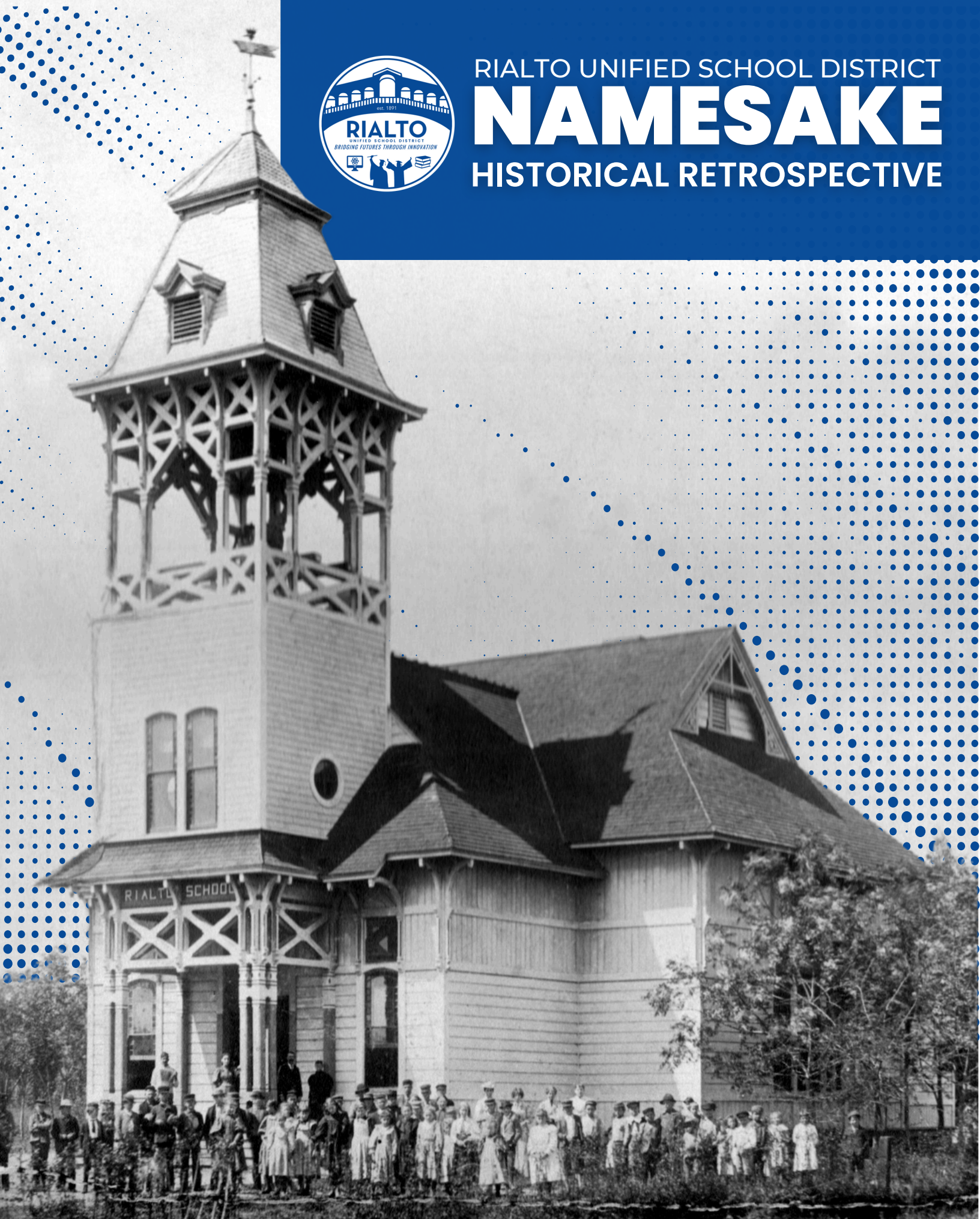


TABLE OF CONTENTS



Elementary Schools

- 2** Mr. Levi Alvin Bemis
- 3** Mr. Joseph Calvin Boyd
- 4** Ms. Millie Merle Sweesy Casey
- 5** Mr. Samuel Victor Curtis
- 6** Mrs. Helen Lundsford Dollahan
- 7** Mr. George Hamilton Dunn
- 8** Dr. Edward Michael Fitzgerald
- 9** Dr. Ernest Felix Garcia
- 10** Mrs. Lida Maria Henry
- 11** Mrs. Elizabeth Townsend Hughbanks
- 12** Mr. John Patrick Kelley
- 13** Mrs. Nancy Ruth Kordyak
- 14** Mr. Albert Harvey Morgan
- 15** Mrs. Georgia Floyd Morris
- 16** Mr. Winafred Abraham Myers
- 17** Mrs. Lena Marie Preston
- 18** Mr. Samuel Walter Simpson
- 19** Mr. William Joseph Christian Trapp
- 20** Mrs. Charlotte Nan Werner

Middle Schools

- 21** Mr. Warren Henry Frisbie
- 22** Mr. William Gordon Jehue
- 23** Mr. Benjamin Franklin Kolb
- 24** Mrs. Ethel Mae Kucera

High Schools

- 25** Mrs. Wilmer Amina Carter
- 26** General Dwight David Eisenhower
- 27** Dr. John Henry Milor
- 28** Mr. Charles Zupanich, Jr.

School/Support Sites

- 29** Dr. John R. Kazalunas
- 30** Mr. Curtis T. Winton
- 31** Mr. Cesar Estrada Chavez
- 32** Mrs. Dolores Clara Fernandez Huerta
- 33** Judge Roscoe Elliott Watts

MR. LEVI ALVIN BEMIS

BEMIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
774 E. ETIWANDA AVENUE
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1966



Mr. Levi Bemis was born in San Bernardino, California, in 1861. His family moved to the City of Rialto in 1862. Levi Bemis, along with other members of his family, was a true pioneer of the Rialto area, even before the City was established. Mr. Bemis helped to run cattle on the Rialto bench, and later, with two of his brothers, started a citrus nursery business. Mr. Bemis planted his own grove with trees from the nursery, he was the Road Master of the Eastern part of San Bernardino County for a number of years, and he was the Zanjoe (in charge of water distribution) for the Lytle Creek Water and Development Company. Mr. Bemis was a highly respected school board trustee of the Rialto School District for two terms. His son, L. Roy Bemis, helped collect much of the information in the History of Rialto. Roy Bemis also served on the Rialto school board from 1941-1966. In 1966, the Rialto Board of Education opened Levi A. Bemis Elementary School.

MR. JOSEPH CALVIN BOYD

BOYD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
310 E. MERRILL AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1954



Mr. Joseph Calvin Boyd was known as a feisty man who loved to arm wrestle. He was born at Boyd's Mill, Ohio, in 1861 and relocated with his parents to Southern California in 1887. After his formal schooling, he taught school in the Cities of Chino, Riverside, and Glendora before becoming the teaching principal of Rialto Elementary School in 1903. While teaching in Glendora, Mr. Boyd planted his orange grove in Rialto on the site of the school named after him. He would peddle all the way along rugged, unpaved roads from Glendora to Rialto every weekend on his bicycle to plant and care for his grove. He spent his weekends and summers in a little shack on the grove until moving to Rialto. After Mr. Boyd's first grove had become well established, he retired from his principalship to devote his time to citrus work. In addition to his groves, he owned a Rialto packinghouse. Mr. Boyd was revered for his "unselfishness and his sense of civic responsibility." He was a director and later president of the First National Bank in Rialto. Mr. Boyd was a conscientious and effective member of the Board of Education of the San Bernardino High School District, of which Rialto, back then, was a part, before its unification. Mr. Boyd also served as a Mayor of Rialto, and President of the Citizens Land and Water Company.

MS. MILLIE MERLE SWEESY CASEY

CASEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
219 N. EUCALYPTUS AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1958



Mrs. Merle Sweesy Casey moved to Rialto, as a child in 1887. The Sweesys were among the earliest settlers of Rialto, arriving as a part of the large group of Methodist families who relocated to Rialto from Halstead, Kansas, to establish a college. Financial difficulties, unfortunately, prevented the establishment of the college, but the Kansas Methodists did play a major role in establishing the City of Rialto. In 1888, Mrs. Merle Casey's father planted the first orchard of navel oranges in Rialto, located on Willow Avenue. Mrs. Casey's mother later became the highly regarded head of the Music Department at Mills College. Mrs. Casey married one of the first forest rangers of this area, Mr. Ben Casey. She took in, and raised, three children, desperately in need of a family, including a niece, and nephew, and an adopted baby girl. Mrs. Casey was very active in the Woman's Club of Rialto. She also served as a school board trustee of the Rialto School District during the 1920s. During her service on the school board, she played a major role in spearheading kindergarten at Rialto schools (previously, all Rialto children had started school in the first grade). Mrs. Casey was remembered as "a very capable and very hard-working woman." She worked tirelessly in maintaining and improving Rialto schools and the City of Rialto, whether it was to employ a qualified new school teacher, convince the Rialto City Council to pave Rialto's many unpaved streets, or improve local law enforcement. Casey Elementary School opened in 1958.

MR. SAMUEL VICTOR CURTIS

CURTIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
451 S. LILAC AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1998



Mr. Samuel V. Curtis was born on August 21, 1921. He was known widely as a compassionate man who lived a life of service to students and seniors. He moved to the City of Rialto in 1954 with his wife, Eileen. He taught in San Bernardino County schools for 27 years, seven of those years at RUSD's Dwight D. Eisenhower High School. In 1974, he won a Rialto City Council seat and served the City for a total of 16 years. While on the city council, the former educator voted against any measure that would go against local schools, including adult clubs or any potential business, such as considering gambling establishments, which would not benefit the youth/students. Mr. Curtis dedicated over four decades of his life to his community. He was president of the Rialto Exchange Club and served on the Non-Violence-In-Our-Community-Schools Committee, the Rialto Task Force on Youth, and the Youth/Teen Center Subcommittee. He was also involved in the Seniors 2000 Committee and would often provide straightforward and passionate editorials to the Rialto Record newspapers, giving the press information so the public could stay aware and the government could remain transparent. The World War II Navy veteran died on November 10, 2000, at the age of 79. He is survived by his three sons, one daughter, and many grandchildren. Mr. Curtis is buried at the Riverside National Cemetery. His obituary stated: "Sam V. Curtis, a Rialto councilman, longtime school teacher, known for his tenacity and honesty, died following surgery." Sam. V. Curtis Elementary School opened in 1998.

MRS. HELEN LUNDSFURD DOLLAHAN



DOLLAHAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1060 W. ETIWANDA AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1985

Mrs. Helen L. Dollahan was born in Columbiana, Ohio. She started her career in education as a high school teacher in Apple Creek, Ohio, and then moved to San Bernardino in 1945, where she taught at Arrowview Junior High School and served as a teacher and counselor at Pacific High School. She transferred to Dwight D. Eisenhower High School when it opened in 1959 and served as assistant principal at Ike from 1959 until her retirement in 1981. During her 22 years at Eisenhower HS, Mrs. Dollahan played a major role in establishing and supporting the Rialto Community Scholarship Association. She provided great leadership for this group, which, over the years, has awarded scholarships to hundreds of Eisenhower HS seniors. The 1963 dedication of Eisenhower High School's annual, "The Aquila," stated, "Time will not erase her profound kindness, her friendly understanding, her winning smile, the helping hand she offers to those who seek her help." Dollahan Elementary School opened in 1985.

MR. GEORGE HAMILTON DUNN

DUNN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
830 N. LILAC AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1957



Mr. George H. Dunn was born in Canada in 1876 and moved with his family to Rialto in 1895. He worked as a train messenger until his retirement in 1941, and then was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Rialto School District in 1942, after the death of his cousin, School Board President William T. Dunn. Mr. George Dunn was a diligent member of the Board of Education and his influence in helping with the planning and development of the schools was far reaching. He forecast that the major development of Rialto would take place in its sparsely populated northern portion, at a time when the City was still a small farming town. Mr. Dunn was a large, jovial, and outgoing man who loved children and adults alike, and he knew virtually everyone in town. Everyone enjoyed meeting and visiting with him. He became good friends with the teachers and custodians at the Rialto Elementary School and the Rialto Junior High School (then the only schools in town). He made regular trips to the school to visit the school cafeteria around noon to lunchtime so he could meet with the teachers, custodians, and students. Dunn Elementary School opened in 1957.

DR. EDWARD MICHAEL FITZGERALD

FITZGERALD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2568 W. TERRA VISTA DR.
RIALTO, CA 92377

OPENED: 1994



Dr. Edward M. Fitzgerald was born in Minnesota in 1904. He graduated as a Physician/Surgeon from the University of Minnesota in 1932, and later moved to the City of Rialto to start his medical practice in 1948, after having served with the U.S. Army during World War II. He would make house calls at any time of the day or night. Dr. Fitzgerald would often not charge when he thought a patient was unable to fulfill their financial obligation. His philanthropic causes grew the longer he lived in Rialto. Dr. Fitzgerald served as the Mayor of Rialto from 1958 to 1962. He was also on the Rialto City Council during 1975-1976, and served as the first chairman of Rialto's Water Commission. He served at different times as Chief of Staff at both the San Bernardino Community Hospital and St. Bernadine's Hospital in San Bernardino. Dr. Fitzgerald was always available to help, give advice, or just "be a friend to anyone" who needed him. Race, religion, or community status made no difference to him. Dr. Fitzgerald was held in the highest esteem by all who crossed his path. Fitzgerald Elementary School opened in 1994.

DR. ERNEST FELIX GARCIA

GARCIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1390 W. RANDALL AVE.
COLTON, CA 92324

OPENED: 1994



Dr. Ernest Garcia was born in Colton, California. The lifelong educator and trailblazer is hailed as a champion for bilingual education, the arts, and is also known as the administrator who spearheaded the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program in RUSD schools. He taught elementary school in Barstow and Redlands and then relocated to Rialto schools to teach Spanish to elementary school students in 1958. Dr. Garcia was a coordinator of foreign languages for elementary school students, and also began planning a program for gifted students. After he had worked several years for the Rialto School District as Coordinator and Curriculum consultant, he became Principal of Dunn Elementary School in 1961. After two years at Dunn, he began to work on his doctorate at UCLA and completed the degree in 1966. In 1967, he became a professor in the Education Department of the University of Redlands. A year later, he joined the faculty of the Education Department at the recently opened Cal State, San Bernardino. In 1979, he became Dean of the School of Education at Cal State San Bernardino, where he served for eleven years, observing the school grow to one of the largest teacher training programs in California. During the time he was teaching at Cal State, he was elected to the Rialto School Board, where he served 9 years from 1970-1979. Dr. Garcia is highly regarded as one of the "most influential Latino leaders" in the Inland Empire. In 2015, the Garcia Center for Arts in San Bernardino was named in honor of Dr. Garcia and his wife, Dr. Dorothy Garcia. Over the age of 90, Dr. Garcia retired as the President of the Garcia Center in 2020. The couple lived in San Bernardino. When time permits, Dr. Garcia would visit his namesake school, which is located in Colton, but a part of the Rialto USD. Dr. Garcia died on April 6, 2023, he was over the age Garcia Elementary School opened in 1994.

MRS. LIDA MARIA HENRY

HENRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
470 E. ETIWANDA AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1954



Mrs. Lida M. Henry was born in Ohio in 1853. She relocated to California in 1888. She lived in Riverside and commuted by horse and buggy each school day to teach in the City of Bloomington. Mrs. Henry was hired by the Rialto School District in 1901 as a teacher of primary grades and was known as a "beloved" teacher of Rialto children until her retirement in 1915. Her extraordinary devotion to her students can be seen in the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of January 4, 1906: "Miss Henry being present, asked to be allowed to teach until 4:00 p.m., instead of letting out at 2:00 p.m., as the law requires and as she has previously done, claiming that she has so many scholars as she cannot do justice to them all in so short a time." She was allowed to have double sessions and divided the 51 students in her class into morning and afternoon sessions. Teaching was her biggest passion in life. Lida M. Henry had a great love for Rialto, and showed her generosity by donating the land for the Woman's Club house, which sits today in Downtown Riverside and is known as the Woman's Club of Rialto. Mrs. Henry was a private woman, and not much more is known about her other than her students cared for her a great deal. Henry Elementary School opened in 1954.

MRS. ELIZABETH TOWNSEND HUGHBANKS

HUGHBANKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2241 N. APPLE AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92377

OPENED: 1998



Mrs. Elizabeth Townsend Hughbanks was born and grew up in Hollywood, California, where her father worked as a Postmaster for a movie studio. She moved to Rialto in 1956. Her husband, Robert Hughbanks, served as Mayor of Rialto. She was involved in an extraordinary amount of volunteer work in the community. She initiated the preschool vision screening program in 1965 and the Rialto Unified School District's Dental Health program in 1971. She was Treasurer of the Rialto Community Scholarship Association for 22 years, President of the Rialto Child Welfare Community for 20 years, and President of the Rialto Historical Society. She served 43 years in the PTA and received the State and national Honorary Life Memberships Awards. Mrs. Hughbanks was appointed to the County Committee on School District Organization in 1987. She has served in many other organizations. She was elected as "Citizen of the Year" by the Rialto Chamber of Commerce, and was the California State Senate "Woman of the Year." Although known as a strong, often stoic, Mrs. Hughbanks made it her life's goal to be involved with helping the youth. Hughbanks Elementary School opened in 1988.

MR. JOHN PATRICK KELLEY

KELLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
380 S. MERIDIAN AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1960



Mr. John Patrick Kelley was born in Illinois and grew up in South Dakota. He worked for the railroad as a fireman and then as an engineer in locomotives, but wanting to avoid spending time away from his family, he followed this by running a grocery store and then a lumber yard. He moved from South Dakota to Rialto in 1919. Mr. Kelley ran a garage business in Rialto and then worked for the Pacific Electric Railroad as a sub-station operator for 23 years, until his retirement in 1923. He managed the sub-station at night and worked at another job during the daytime, and became known as "24-hour Kelley." Mr. Kelley was appointed to be the Rialto School District's first crossing guard in 1949, and continued that work until his death in 1958. The small town of Rialto had such light traffic in its early days that no one saw the need for a school crossing guard, but in 1949, the town had grown enough so that traffic was becoming heavier, with more students entering schools, and Mr. Kelley pioneered the role of a crossing guard. He trained the elementary school children to wait for a safe time to cross rather than allowing them to become dependent on the crossing guard. Many recognized that the former fireman's teaching of safety for students walking to school was a vital part of early childhood education. Students enjoyed seeing Mr. Kelley each morning, and they looked forward to greeting him on their daily travels to and from school. Kelley Elementary School opened in 1960.

MRS. NANCY RUTH KORDYAK

KORDYAK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
4580 MANGO AVE.
FONTANA, CA 92336

OPENED: 2010



Mrs. Nancy R. Kordyak was born on October 8, 1940. She was born in Loma Linda, California, but grew up in San Bernardino (Muscoy area). She was a beloved, longtime educator in the City of Rialto. In 2009, the RUSD Board of Education voted, unanimously, to name the District's 19th elementary school after lifelong teacher and beloved administrator, Nancy Ruth Kordyak. She dedicated 40 years of service to the Rialto Unified School District; the first 24 years as a classroom teacher, and the next 16 years as an administrator. The San Bernardino High School and Long Beach State alum began working as a teacher at Kelley Elementary School in 1962. Mrs. Kordyak worked at Kelley for 25 years. After serving as a teacher and an assistant principal at Kelley, she transferred to Hughbanks Elementary School as an assistant principal. In 1998, Nancy took the responsibility of dual assistant principal at Hughbanks and Trapp Elementary Schools. In 1999, she served as the assistant principal at Fitzgerald Elementary School. She retired from Fitzgerald Elementary School in 2002. Mrs. Kordyak was married to her husband, Don, for 46 years. They raised one daughter, Carrie Kordyak Gilbreath. Carrie visits the school named after her mother often and gives generously whenever the school needs support. Mrs. Kordyak passed away on December 6, 2008. Kordyak Elementary School opened on August 4, 2010.. Although Kordyak Elementary School is a Rialto USD elementary school, it is the only school in the City of Fontana.

MR. ALBERT HARVEY MORGAN

MORGAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1571 N. SYCAMORE AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1961



Mr. Albert H. Morgan was born in Leon, Kansas, but spent his early years in the City of Riverside. He moved to the City of Rialto in 1904 to manage a citrus packinghouse. Mr. Morgan brought the first electric lights to a Rialto packinghouse. In 1916, he became manager and owner of his own packinghouse. He owned and farmed 250 acres of oranges and grapefruit in the Rialto area. Morgan Elementary School is on the site of his former groves. In 1929, Mr. Morgan perfected a sodium carbonate preservative for citrus, which extended the "fresh" life of citrus during shipment and storage. Although offered a great deal of money for his invention, he donated the patent to the citrus industry at large, stating that the citrus industry had been very good to him and he believed he owed it something in return. Mr. Morgan provided Rialto with great entertainment during the 1930s by organizing a championship night ball team, and building a lighted community Ball Park with bleachers for fans to enjoy the games.. He was elected to Rialto's first city council in 1911. He was very active in civic projects, such as serving as chairman of the San Bernardino County Red Cross, a pioneer of the National Orange Show. He had an octagonal building constructed for the Rialto Boy Scouts. He performed regularly with various singing groups. He helped many males in trouble with the law during his 15 years of service on the San Bernardino County Probation Board. He advised and encouraged the youth and often gave them jobs in his business or helped them locate jobs. Mr. Morgan always considered helping children to a sound career path as one of his most important contributions. Few people knew about this role in his work. Mr. Morgan's daughter, Mrs. Jean Morgan Randall, taught for 20 years in Rialto's Elementary schools, and his son, Al Morgan, Jr., served two terms on the San Bernardino High School Board. Morgan Elementary School opened in 1961.

MRS. GEORGIA FLOYD MORRIS

MORRIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1900 W. RANDALL AVE.
COLTON, CA 92324

OPENED: 1999



Mrs. Georgia Floyd Morris was a trailblazer in the Rialto Unified School District, who broke racial and equity barriers. She was born on December 21, 1922, in Georgia. Her highly successful career in education began in Waverly Hall, Georgia, and ended in the Rialto Unified School District. She began working in the RUSD 1967 in administrative posts in Human Relations, Head Start, Guidance, Personnel, and Child Welfare and Attendance. Mrs. Morris, whose Rialto home was a shrine/museum of African American, Latin, Native American, and European historical artifacts, was a place where many educators visited often. "My home represents all the children I have served," she smiled. "Children need to identify with us before they learn." Mrs. Morris was once a youth counselor for the California State Department of Corrections Addiction Division at Norco and Hollywood. During her time at the RUSD, she brought innovative ideas and concepts to school leaders. Her accomplishments in the field of administration were impressive, and she earned many before coming to the RUSD, including holding the position of Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Harris County, Georgia, and serving as Director of Indian Education. She brought the concept of the now State-recognized District Student Advisory Council (DSAC), firmly stating: "Students should be a part of education not only in the classroom but as young leaders." She earned many awards, including the 1988 Presidential Citation from the National Association of Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Education Award, the Southern California Edison Leadership in Community Activities Award, the Rialto Record's Education Leader to Watch, and the Black Voice News' Women's Achievement Award. Mrs. Morris' husband, Rudolph Morris, an only child, Donald, passed years before her. She did not remarry. Mrs. Morris is the only African-American woman to have an elementary school namesake after her. Mrs. Morris passed away on December 11, 2011. Morris Elementary School opened in 1999.

MR. WINAFRED ABRAHAM MYERS

MYERS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
975 N. MERIDIAN AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1959



Mr. Winn A. Myers relocated to the City of Rialto from Troy, New York, in 1888. Mr. Myers worked for a year after arriving in California, on a farm, which was located where the San Bernardino County Hospital now stands. One of his jobs was with the old Chris and Snow Nursery, which is known as the Ferris-Morris Seed Company. On the advice of Mr. Morris, Mr. Myers acquired ten areas of land on North Pepper (Avenue) below Baseline (Road) and planted an orange grove that became so productive that it was the envy of many other growers nearby. Mr. Myers irrigated his grove with water from Lytle Creek, which flowed to the grove through wooden flumes. He loved to grow flowers at his home, and it became known as the "Flower Place." People also remembered Mr. Myers for his booming voice. He was loud. Mr. Myers always worked to improve Rialto. He served for 20 years as a Clerk of the Rialto School Board, after having been elected to the Board of Education in 1908. Mr. Myers was also on the Board of Directors of the Lytle Creek Water and Improvement Company for many years. During this time, he made great contributions to the development of water suppliers in the Rialto area. Mr. Myers was always concerned about the well-being of children, worked to improve Rialto's schools, and regarded the Rialto schools as the very best in all of San Bernardino County. He remained active and vitally interested in school activities until he died in 1956. Myers Elementary School opened in 1959.

MRS. LENA MARIE PRESTON

PRESTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1750 N. WILLOW AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1955



Mrs. Lena Marie Preston was born on a farm in Germany in 1877 and moved to the City of Rialto in 1905. In addition to caring for her own large family, she turned herself into an "unpaid" one-woman welfare agency for Rialto, at a time before any government welfare agency existed. There was never a call for help that she was not the first to answer. At times, when Lytle Creek was full of water, San Bernardino doctors were not able to cross the wash in their buggies to reach Rialto, and she delivered many babies herself. Dr. Walter Cherry, an early Rialto doctor, recalled: "Whenever I needed to transport someone to the hospital and could not break away, I simply called Mrs. Preston, and it was as good as done. I don't know why she wasn't on my payroll." Mrs. Preston's social life centered around two organizations: First Methodist Church and the Rialto Woman's Club. In both organizations (naturally) she was the Welfare Chairman. Members of the Woman's Club who were contacted said, "You never had to be concerned over a welfare project if Mrs. Preston was there. She just quietly organized it." She did an enormous amount of volunteer work with the Red Cross during World Wars I and II, where she was a whirlwind of energy on the Red Cross Board. She worked with sewing groups and mailed gifts overseas to soldiers. Mrs. Preston distributed food to those in need during the depression years and was instrumental with medical and child welfare volunteer work for the Community Chest for many years. Perhaps her best-known contribution to the Rialto schools was in starting "a free milk" program. She made sure that little children received milk, and also ensured that no family was deprived of milk because they could not pay their bills. Many times, she just quietly paid various community members' bills from her own pocket. She did not publicize her actions, and in turn, many recognized her true heart for all youth. Preston Elementary School opened in 1955.

MR. SAMUEL WALTER SIMPSON

SIMPSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1050 S. LILAC AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1987



Mr. Samuel W. Simpson was born in Ephrata, Washington in 1920. He began his career in Public Education as a sixth-grade teacher in Redlands during the 1946-1947 school year. One year later, he relocated to Rialto Schools in 1947 as a teacher/assistant principal at Roscoe Watts Elementary School (Rialto USD's Watts Elementary School has since closed). Mr. Simpson was the Principal at Watts from 1949 to 1955 and then became Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services until his retirement in 1981. Mr. Simpson was so passionate about hiring the best teachers, it is widely known that he would make regular recruiting trips to the East Coast and the Midwest to select teachers for the Rialto Unified School District. He and Dr. John Milor (of Milor High School) had the foresight to buy land for school sites before the prices for property had soared; this action saved the District thousands (millions in today's calculation) Mr. Simpson was dedicated to serving the youth of the community and participated in many clubs and organizational activities in Rialto. He was the Director of the Rialto Summer Youth programs and worked with Mr. Carl Johnson on recreation programs for the youth and children of Rialto. Simpson Elementary School opened in 1987.

MR. WILLIAM JOSEPH CHRISTIAN TRAPP

TRAPP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2750 RIVERSIDE AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92377

OPENED: 1964



Mr. William Joseph Christian Trapp moved to Rialto in 1905 from Averill Park, New York. He was an orange grower and a war hero. He took part in World War I battles of Argonne Forest, Matz, Ly-Sheldt, and others. He received France's highest military honor, the Medaille Militaire, for acts of extreme bravery while serving as a member of the Suicide Squad in Belgium. He helped to organize the American Legion Post, Robert Allen Romo, and was its commander for years. Mr. Trapp served on the Board of Trustees of the Rialto School Board for 29 years, from 1933 to 1962, and was the President of the Board of Trustees for 20 years, from 1942 to 1962. He missed only one school board meeting during all those years. He was very forthright in expressing his ideas and fought passionately to make the Rialto schools the best that they could be. He played a large role in planning the growth of the Rialto School District, with the number of elementary school students increasing from 300 at the time of his first election to the School Board in 1933, 4,800 elementary pupils at the time he left the School Board in 1962. When the W. J. C. Trapp Elementary School was named after him in 1964, it was the first time that a Rialto school had ever been named after a living person. He, along with his family, was very proud. Trapp Elementary opened in 1964.

MRS. CHARLOTTE NAN WERNER

WERNER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1050 W. RIALTO AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1964



Mrs. Charlotte Werner was born in San Gabriel, Ca., on May 22, 1959. After she married her husband, Alan Werner, on December 2, 1978, the couple moved to Rialto in 1980. After moving to Rialto, Mrs. Werner became a mother of three girls, Nicole, Tessa, and Johanna. As soon as her children entered the Rialto Unified School District, Mrs. Werner was an active volunteer in any and every facet of the community. She volunteered her time with the PTA, Girl Scouts, booster club, and later, after the Werner children graduated, Mrs. Werner continued to be an active member of the Exchange Club of Rialto, along with the District level of the PTA. She spent every moment possible trying to improve school programs. She fundraised tirelessly for everything that the youth of Rialto needed. From Red Ribbon Week to Scholarship Night, Mrs. Werner stayed involved. At the age of 47, she welcomed her first grandchild with loving arms. Unfortunately, Mrs. Werner's life was cut short unexpectedly on March 17, 2007. Mrs. Werner will always be remembered as a strong advocate for youth programs in the community. Werner Elementary School opened in 2008.

MR. WARREN HENRY FRISBIE

FRISBIE MIDDLE SCHOOL
1442 N. EUCALYPTUS AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1966



Mr. Warren H. Frisbie was born in Anderson, California, in 1897, and relocated to the City of Rialto with his family at the age of 3. He served in World War I, and owned a Rialto hardware store from 1922 to 1944. He was a realtor, served as the President of the Rialto Board of Realtors, and was also the Mayor of Rialto from 1948 to 1950. Mr. Frisbie did an enormous amount of volunteer work to improve the lives of the people in Rialto and the surrounding communities. He worked hard to help people get jobs during the Great Depression and made great efforts to obtain state and federal relief money to help during those desperate times. He was Post Commander of the American Legion; a member of the County Committee on School District Organization; on the Board of Trustees at Valley College for 22 years; President of Eisenhower High School's American Field Service; President of the Rotary Club; a tireless worker for the Red Cross; a worker for the crippled children's organization and the Arrowhead United Way Fund; a member of the Rialto Chamber of Commerce Committee; and director of the Methodist Church Sunday School for many years. Frisbie Park was also named in his honor. Frisbie Middle School opened in 1966.

MR. WILLIAM GORDON JEHUE

JEHUE MIDDLE SCHOOL
1500 N. EUCALYPTUS AVE.
COLTON, CA 92324

OPENED: 1998



Mr. William H. Jehue began his career with Rialto Schools in 1958, at Lena M. Preston Elementary School as a teaching assistant principal. In 1968, he was named Principal of Morgan Elementary School. Mr. Jehue was named the Principal at Dunn Elementary School in 1972, and then went back to Preston Elementary School in 1980. Mr. Jehue retired from the RUSD in 1985 and was successfully elected to the Rialto Unified School District Board of Education that same year. During his tenure on the Rialto Unified School District Board of Education, he served as Member, Clerk, Vice President, and President. He was known for being outspoken if he felt something needed his attention. He has also been a member of the Rialto Jaycees and the Rialto Host Lions Club. Mr. Jehue had won "Lion of the Year Award," "Helen Keller Award" for service to Vision Care, and the "Melvin Jones Award." He was awarded a lifetime membership for the Lions Clubs International for his many years of service to the Rialto Host Lions Club and to his community. Mr. Jehue also received the PTA Honorary Life and Continuing Service Awards. Mr. Jehue caused regional controversy in the press when, as a sitting Rialto Board Member, he did not abstain, but rather voted for his own school namesake. The agenda passed with a vote of 3-2. William G. Jehue Middle School opened in 1998.

MR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN KOLB

KOLB MIDDLE SCHOOL
2351 N. SPRUCE AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92377

OPENED: 1968



Mr. Benjamin F. Kolb was born in Gadsden, Arizona in 1916, as the youngest of nine children. He grew up and graduated from Garden Grove, California. He worked after school in an orange packinghouse. He married Mary, who was the daughter of a Rialto kindergarten teacher, Margaret Todd, in 1939. Mr. Kolb moved to the City of Rialto in 1942, where he was a meat manager at Stater Brothers grocery stores for 17 years. He later was co-owner of a meat market on Rialto Avenue. Two of his three children, Ben Kolb Jr., and Donna Lynn Mueller, became teachers. Ben Jr., was a teacher and Principal in Northern California, and then became a high school teacher in Oregon. Donna taught third grade at Georgia Morris Elementary School in Rialto. Mr. Kolb always enjoyed helping children, and helped to begin Little League Baseball in Rialto. He was one of the founders of the Rialto Fish and Game Club. Mr. Kolb is best known for his contribution to education, serving as a member of the the Rialto Board of Trustees from 1954 to 1958. He has been known by family and friends as a man of "outstanding character."

MRS. ETHEL MAE KUCERA

KUCERA MIDDLE SCHOOL
2140 W. BUENA VISTA DR.
RIALTO, CA 92377

OPENED: 1995



Mrs. Ethel Mae Kucera was born on May 31, 1920. She moved to the City of Rialto in the late 1940s. A hard worker and accomplished seamstress, she worked in a restaurant and made draperies for various department stores. She became active in the PTA, Rialto Historical Society, and Rialto Child Assistance. Mrs. Kucera served 45 years in the PTA, and received Honorary State and National Life memberships. She dedicated her entire life to improving the lives of underprivileged children in the RUSD. Rialto Child Assistance (RCA) a non-profit organization is, in effect, the essence of who Ethel Kucera was, and everyone else in that organization has worked to support her. She developed outstanding skills as a seamstress and has made great use of these skills mending countless articles of clothing for RCA. She had been selected as a Citizen of the Year by the Rialto Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Kucera dedicated so much of her life to others that during the last years of her life, she opened her doors to just about anyone who needed food or shelter, including the homeless. She passed, at the age of 87, in 2008. Kucera Middle School opened in 1995.

MRS. WILMER AMINA CARTER

CARTER HIGH SCHOOL
2630 N. LINDEN AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92377

OPENED: 2004



Former Assemblywoman, **Mrs. Wilmer Amina Carter** represented the 62nd District in the California Assembly for six years. Mrs. Carter graduated from San Bernardino High School, and after attending San Bernardino Valley College, earned her bachelor's and master's degree from California State University, San Bernardino. Prior to being elected to the California State Assembly, she served on the Rialto Unified School District Board of Education for 16 years, starting in 1983. She was a staff member to the late Congressman George Brown for 26 years. In 2010, she was inducted into SBVC's Hall of Fame. Mrs. Carter's legislative measures include requiring high schools to notify parents and pupils of the required curriculum for admission to the UC and CSU systems, and a bill protecting government workers from road rage assault. Mrs. Carter has dedicated her life to public service. After she retired from the Rialto Unified School District Board, the Board honored her by naming Rialto's newest comprehensive high school after her; this designation gave Mrs. Carter the distinction of being the first living African American woman in the Inland Empire to have a comprehensive high school named in her honor. Currently, through her nonprofit Creative Business Services, Inc., she is archiving, "The African American Presence and Contributions to the Inland Empire." Mrs. Carter grew up in the 1940s on a rural farm in Mississippi before moving to California in 1950. She worked for the social science department at Cal State San Bernardino, and in 1968, she was moved to a program to recruit minorities for the state college system. Mrs. Carter helped organize the local Kwanzaa observances and administered a jobs program in San Bernardino. She has spent most of her adult life in the cause of improving the lives of minorities and providing educational opportunities for youngsters of all colors. Carter High School opened in 2004.

GENERAL DWIGHT DAVID EISENHOWER

EISENHOWER HIGH SCHOOL
2630 N. LINDEN AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92377

OPENED: 1959



General Dwight David "Ike" Eisenhower was born on October 14, 1890, and passed on March 28, 1969. He was a Five-Star General in the United States Army and the 34th President of the United States, from 1953 until 1961. During World War II, he served as Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in Europe, with responsibility for planning and supervising the successful invasion of France and Germany in 1944–45, from the Western Front. In 1951, he became the first supreme commander of NATO. A Republican, Gen. Eisenhower entered the 1952 presidential race to counter the isolationism of Sen. Robert A. Taft, and to crusade against "Communism, Korea, and corruption" (that is, the policies of President Harry Truman in those areas). He won by a landslide, ending two decades of New Deal control of the White House. As President, Eisenhower threatened to use nuclear weapons, forcing China to agree to a cease-fire of the Korean War. He maintained pressure on the Soviet Union during the Cold War, gave priority to inexpensive nuclear weapons, and reduced the other forces to save money. He had to play catch-up in the Space Race after the Soviets launched the Sputnik satellite in 1957. On the domestic front, he helped remove Joseph McCarthy from power but otherwise left most political chores to his Vice President, Richard Nixon. Gen. Eisenhower's two terms were peaceful and generally prosperous except for a sharp economic recession in 1958–59. Historians typically rank Eisenhower among the top ten U.S. presidents. Eisenhower High School opened in 1959, and remains the District's flagship school.

DR. JOHN HENRY MILOR

MILOR HIGH SCHOOL
266 W. RANDALL AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1981



Dr. John Milor was born in Michigan in 1900. He spent many years as a teacher and a school administrator in Michigan, Arizona, and San Bernardino before becoming Principal at Rialto Junior High School in 1946. He was Principal of Rialto Junior High School from 1946 to 1957, and served as the Superintendent of the Rialto School District from 1946 to 1964 until his retirement in 1966. His hobby was learning the Spanish language. He did postgraduate work in Spanish at the University of San Francisco, in Valencia, Spain, and in Guadalajara, Mexico, and he wrote a textbook in Spanish for children. Dr. Milor spent many years traveling in Mexico. He was also very community-minded. He was Lieutenant Governor of the California-Nevada-Hawaii Kiwanis District, President of Goodwill Industries of the Inland Counties, and President of the Arrowhead United Fund. He started Rialto's sister city project and was very active in the First Congregational Church. When Dr. Milor was superintendent of Rialto Schools, the community was small enough that he was able to know all the Rialto teachers well, and he visited classrooms frequently. He encouraged teachers to play an active role in the community organizations and events. Dr. Milor had strong opinions about many subjects, but even when disagreeing strongly with others, he showed class. He was always willing to take leadership in progressive programs. Milor High School opened in 1981.

MR. CHARLES ZUPANIC, JR.

ZUPANIC HIGH SCHOOL
266 W. RANDALL AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1981



Mr. Charles Zupanic Jr. was born in Ohio, and moved his wife, former longtime Rialto City Councilwoman Midge Zupanic, and family to the City of Rialto in 1965. Mr. Zupanic spent 22 years with the Rialto Unified School District as a classroom teacher, counselor, and Child Welfare and Attendance Coordinator. Known as a jovial man, he was always a simple person, who worked very hard in keeping students from being "at risk," and encouraged education to any youth he came into contact with.. His children, including John Jr., all graduated from Eisenhower High School. Although Mr. Zupanic passed, his widow still shows up each year to donate a scholarship in his name to students at Zupanic High School. Zupanic High School opened in 1981.

DR. JOHN R. KAZALUNAS

DR. JOHN R. KAZALUNAS EDUCATION CENTER
182 E. WALNUT AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

RENAMED: 2011



Dr. John R. Kazalunas was a retired psychologist, lifelong educator, decorated military veteran, active community member, and a member of the Rialto Unified School District Board of Education for 20 years. Dr. Kazalunas was elected five times and had three separate stints on the Board of Education — from 1979 to 1987, from 1989 to 1997, and from 2006 to 2010. Dr. John R. Kazalunas was born on August 27, 1931. Dr. Kazalunas spent more than 40 years in public education, where he earned the reputation as the “busiest man in education.” He earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of Nebraska, his master’s degree from American University, and his doctorate from the University of Virginia. He worked as a teacher, counselor, vice principal, and university professor. He was first elected to the RUSD Board of Education in December 1979. Known as a vocal advocate for both students and staff, Dr. Kazalunas was elected five times (20 years) and had three separate stints on the Board of Education — from 1979 to 1987, from 1989 to 1997, and from 2006 to 2010. During his tenure, he opened several schools and support facilities. In addition to his lengthy resume in education, Dr. Kazalunas served 21 years in the United States Marine Corps and fought in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. He was awarded the Purple Heart after being wounded during the Vietnam War. Dr. Kazalunas was married to his wife, Theresa for 68 years. Mrs. Kazalunas lives in the City of Rialto. Dr. Kazalunas was one of the first Causcian members of the Rialto Black History Committee. He was a Lion’s Club Member, a Kiwanian and was one of the first to purchase tickets to the RUSD annual Ritz (Rialto Incredible Talent Zone) Fine Arts Student Gala. “Anything that helps kids, I will support no matter what.” Dr. John R. Kazalunas Education Center was approved by the RUSD Board of Education on January 12, 2011, renaming the RUSD’s central office. A dedication ceremony was held on February 17 that same year. Dr. Kazalunas died January 10, 2023, at the age of 91.

MR. CURTIS T. WINTON

CURTIS T. WINTON PARENT CENTER
324 N. PALM AVE.
RIALTO, CA 92376

DEDICATED: 2014



Mr. Curtis T. Winton was a dedicated community leader and parent advocate with both children and grandchildren who attended schools in the Rialto Unified School District. Curtis T. Winton Parent Institute. Winton was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1941. He lived in Rialto for over 36 years and was actively involved as an education volunteer for three decades. He served as the District Advisory Committee (DAC) President in 2005 and was the PTA President at Kolb Middle School in 2006. Mr. Winton spearheaded the creation of the annual RUSD Parent Summit, which started in 2009 and draws more than 3,000 parents. The annual summit is used to celebrate, inform, educate, and inspire parents. Mr. Winton believed parents are an essential part of the educational system. "The structure is like a three-legged table," Winton said. "You have students, administration, and parents. Any one of the three not doing what they are supposed to do, the table falls. " He was awarded the "Key to the District," the District's highest honor, in 2012, by RUSD Board President, Mr. Michael G. Ridgway. Mr. Winton helped develop the Parent Institute, a space designed as a welcoming resource center, classroom, and meeting area for parents. It encourages all parents/guardians to continue and develop their learning, to enhance their students' development, advance professionally, feel nurtured, and empowered. After Mr. Winton's passing in 2013, at the age of 72, the RUSD Board of Education unanimously approved the namesake of the Curtis T. Winton Parent Institute on June 17, 2013. A dedication ceremony was held on October 14, 2014.

MR. CESAR ESTRADA CHAVEZ

CESAR CHAVEZ/DOLORES HUERTA CENTER FOR EDUCATION

324 N PALM AVE
RIALTO, CA 92376

RENAMED: 2010



The late civil rights icon, **Mr. Cesar Chavez**, was born to Librado Chavez and Juana Estrada Chavez in 1927. The iconic migrant farm worker from Yuma, Arizona, would go on to organize and revolutionize the United Farm Workers (UFW) union by boycotting grape growers in California for five years. Inspired by the peaceful movements of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi, in 1968, Mr. Chavez fearlessly went on a 25-day hunger strike that drew international attention. During a 24-day fast in Phoenix, Arizona, Chavez, and fellow activist Dolores Huerta adopted the phrase "Si, Se Puede," which became the anthem for the UFW movement. Later, under Mr. Chavez and Mrs. Huerta's relentless teamwork, the UFW was able to negotiate a contract for higher wages and better treatment of agricultural workers. Mr. Chavez died in 1993, in his sleep. An estimated 50,000 mourners attended his funeral. Former US President Bill Clinton awarded Mr. Chavez the "Medal of Freedom" in 1994. In 2010, RUSD Board of Education renamed the former Professional Development Center in the RUSD the Cesar Chavez/Dolores Huerta Center for Education. In March 2010, one of Mr. Chavez's sons and Mrs. Dolores Huerta personally attended the Grand Opening of the Chavez/Huerta Center for Education in Rialto.

MRS. DOLORES CLARA FERNANDEZ HUERTA

CESAR CHAVEZ/DOLORES HUERTA CENTER FOR EDUCATION

324 N PALM AVE
RIALTO, CA 92376

RENAMED: 2010



Mrs. Dolores Huerta is hailed as the strongest female voice in the struggle for labor rights for migrant farm workers. She is the co-founder of the "UFW." Mrs. Huerta was born in Dawson, New Mexico, to Juan Fernandez and Alice Chavez Fernandez, but was raised primarily by her mother, along with other siblings. Mrs. Huerta graduated from Delta Community College, part of the University of the Pacific. She worked as an elementary school teacher before joining the labor movement. While teaching, Mrs. Huerta observed that her students, many of them children of farm workers, were living in poverty without basic necessities. She became one of the founders of the Stockton chapter of the Community Services Organization (CSO). During his lifetime, iconic leader of the UFW, the late Cesar Chavez, worked and marched alongside Mrs. Huerta, and eventually formed the UFW. Mrs. Huerta stepped down from her position at the UFW in 1999, but she continues to improve the lives of workers, immigrants, and women. She has received many honors for her activism, including the "Ellis Island Medal of Freedom Award" (1993) and the "Eleanor Roosevelt Award" (1999). She was inducted to the "National Women's Hall of Fame" in 1993. Former President Barack Obama honored Mrs. Huerta, a mother of 11 children, with the Presidential Medal of Freedom honor in 2012. Two years before her national honor, the RUSD Board of Education renamed the former Professional Development Center in the RUSD the Cesar Chavez/Dolore Huerta Center for Education. In March 2010, one of Mr. Chavez's sons, and Mrs. Dolores Huerta, personally, attended the Grand Opening of the Chavez/Huerta Center for Education in Rialto.

JUDGE ROSCOE ELLIOTT WATTS

WATTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SECOND AND PALM ST.
RIALTO, CA 92376

OPENED: 1950 | CLOSED: 1976



Mr. Roscoe E. Watts was born in San Bernardino in 1889, and moved to Rialto in 1891. During his busy life, he worked in almost every part of the local business and government world. Mr. Watts was an orange grower, a county roadman, lumber yard worker, school custodian, postmaster and city judge. He found time to be active in many fraternal and club activities. He was a past Master of the Rialto Masonic Lodge, a Charter member of the Rialto Rotary Club, life member of the San Bernardino Elks Lodge, a member of the Native Sons of the Golden West, and a life member of the Rialto Congregational Church. For his many years in Rialto, his tremendous sense of humor and generous nature endeared him to Rialto's adults and children. He was so greatly admired that his funeral was one of the largest in Rialto's history. City offices and many local businesses took the unprecedented steps of closing their doors that day. Judge Watts was a pioneer in his great efforts to help straighten out the lives of children and young adults who got into trouble with the law. Many young men who had been troubled youngsters and who had received Judge Watts help came to his funeral to pay their respects. Judge Watts made it his purpose to assist the underprivileged, quietly. His generosity also showed itself when he used his own money to buy gifts, and then distribute them to children of impoverished families on Christmas Day. According to historians, "Judge Watts was one of the finest and most beloved people ever to live in the City of Rialto." Rialto Elementary School was opened in 1950 and changed its name to Roscoe E. Watts Elementary in 1955.



RIALTO

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BRIDGING FUTURES THROUGH INNOVATION

History gives us context. It informs us where we come from, as individuals, communities, and nations. The City of Rialto and its School District have a rich history. Since the inception of Rialto USD on April 9, 1891, the District's cultural values, traditions, language(s) and beliefs have grown and evolved, we must still understand and respect who came before us and how their own commitment to students, parents and communities has contributed to their names earning a school namesake. Below are the District and School Administration who have worked tirelessly to compile his rich history of the Rialto USD, with scrutiny, fact-checks and through data provided below.

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