

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

APPROVED

NO. 09-274

DATE October 21, 2009

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**BOARD OF RECREATION
and PARK COMMISSIONERS**

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SUBJECT: JACKIE ROBINSON STADIUM - MEMORIAL PLAQUE IN HONOR OF KEVIN COPELAND

R. Adams	_____	J. Kolb	_____
H. Fujita	_____	F. Mok	_____
S. Huntley	_____	*K. Regan	_____
V. Israel	_____	M. Shull	_____

[Handwritten Signature]

 General Manager

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Approve the installation of a memorial plaque at the Jackie Robinson Stadium in honor of Kevin Copeland; and,
2. Authorize Department staff to install the memorial plaque as stated in the Summary of this report.

SUMMARY:

Jackie Robinson Stadium is a beautifully renovated football stadium located inside the Rancho Cienega Sports Complex. The stadium offers a number of recreational opportunities and is well used by the community. The stadium is also the home field for the Dorsey High School football team, the Dorsey Dons.

Kevin Copeland grew up in Baldwin Hills and was the son of US Olympic Gold Medal hurdler Ron Copeland. Tragically, Ron Copeland died of a heart attack when Kevin and his two brothers, Ron and Kyle, were all young boys. They were raised solely by their mother Millicent Copeland.

Following in the footsteps of their father, all three boys were athletes at Dorsey High School. The oldest brother, Ron Copeland, Jr., received a track scholarship at the University of Southern California (USC) where he was destined to become the next Edwin Moses (the greatest hurdler in

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world history). The youngest brother, Kyle Copeland, was possibly the greatest athlete of all three brothers.

Kevin, the middle brother, was a star football player at Dorsey High School, and in 1989 Kevin was the number one wide receiver college recruit in the country. It was certain that Kevin would not only excel at college football but would eventually move on to the NFL. More importantly, like both of his brothers, he was an outstanding student and great kid. Raised only by their mother in a low income community, all three boys were model athletes and students.

However, tragedy struck in October 1989 when Kevin suddenly died of a heart attack on the football field during a Dorsey High School football game. Kevin had shown no signs of illness, but had suffered from an undiagnosed congenital heart condition.

After Kevin's passing, the 1989 Dorsey High School football team went on to win the City Championship and a few of the players from this team went on to play in the NFL. The coach from 1989, Paul Knox, is still the head coach at Dorsey today along with volunteer assistant coach Martin Ludlow.

Shortly after Kevin's death, the weight room at Dorsey High School was re-named after Kevin and a large mural of him still stands on the campus. Twenty years later, coaches and community members still tell stories of Kevin Copeland; not just because of the player he was, but because of the great person he was.

Councilmember Wesson, Jimmy Blackman, Martin Ludlow, and Coach Knox have proposed the installation of this plaque at Jackie Robinson Stadium during a memorial ceremony in honor of Kevin Copeland which is proposed to be held on October 23, 2009, during the half-time of the Dorsey High School game.

The plaque would be made of bronze, approximately 20" X 20" in size, and would contain the following names and memorial phrases:

In loving memory of Kevin Copeland, a beloved son, brother, teammate and friend. We remember you and all of the great Dorsey Dons that we have lost along the way. Dedicated October 23, 2009, Councilmember Herb Wesson, Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners, Copeland family, Blackman family, Coach Paul Knox, 1989 City Champion Dorsey Dons.

Staff has determined that the subject project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Article III, Section I, Class 11 (1) of the City CEQA guidelines, which provides for the placement of signs on park property as accessory structures to

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recreational facilities.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

No significant fiscal impacts will be incurred, as plaque and installation costs will be paid for by private donations. The Department will remove graffiti as necessary and any additional maintenance costs will be insignificant.

This report was prepared by Kevin Regan, Assistant General Manager, Operations West.