

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

September 26, 2023

Proclaiming “Edward James Olmos Day” in Los Angeles County

Born February 24, 1947, in East Los Angeles at The First Japanese Hospital to Pedro Olmos and Eleanor Huizar, Edward James Olmos has a career that spans five decades. He was raised on Cheesebrough’s Lane – attending Greenwood Elementary and Montebello Junior High before graduating from Montebello High School in 1964. After receiving an Associative Arts Degree in Sociology and Criminal Justice at East Los Angeles College in 1966, Olmos developed an interest in acting. Olmos since then has gone on to receive many accolades from the City of Montebello, including the Alumni of The Year from Montebello High School in 2014, and Man of the Year Award from The Mexican American Opportunity Foundation in 2015.

In the early 1970s, Olmos appeared in many small stage productions around Los Angeles County before getting his big break when he was cast as El Pachuco in Luis Valdez’s landmark “Zoot Suit,” which highlighted the real-life events of the Sleepy Lagoon murder trial in which 12 Latino youths were unjustly convicted and the Zoot

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Suit Riots. When the play premiered at the Mark Taper Forum in 1978, it was the first professionally produced Chicano play presented by Center Theatre Group and the first Chicano play on Broadway – earning Olmos a Tony nomination. He repeated his role in the subsequent 1981 film, also written and directed by Valdez.

He gained notoriety for his role in the crime series “Miami Vice” in which he received an Emmy nomination and won, as well as in “Stand and Deliver” which was based on the true story of Garfield High School math teacher Jaime Escalante and earned him an Oscar nomination. He then directed, produced, and starred in the 1992 drama feature “American Me” and other landmark works such as “The Burning Season.” He again gained prominence starring as William Adama in the re-imagined cable series “Battlestar Galactica” which became a television phenomenon.

In 1998, he founded Latino Public Broadcasting which funds public television programming focused on issues affecting Latinos. Olmos was also one of the driving forces that created “Americanos: Latino Life in the U.S.,” a 1999 book project featuring over 30 award-winning photographers that later was turned into a Smithsonian traveling exhibition.

While he has achieved extraordinary success as an actor, director, and producer, the Tony, Emmy, and Oscar-nominated actor is a devoted humanitarian making frequent appearances at juvenile halls to speak to at-risk youth. He has also been a U.S. Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF and executive director of the Lives In Hazard Educational Project, a national gang prevention program funded by the U.S. Department of Justice. Olmos also founded the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival (LALIFF) – a premier international event dedicated to showcasing the entirety of human experience from the Latino perspective, whether through film, television,

digital, music, art, or any other vehicle, regardless of platform.

Olmos' dedication to his craft has brought him attention across the industry, and to audiences worldwide. To that end, it is fitting that Los Angeles County uplift his contributions to Latinos during Hispanic Heritage Month through a proclamation.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim Friday, October 13, 2023, as Edward James Olmos Day in Los Angeles County to celebrate his remarkable achievements to the Latino community in the arts, media, and philanthropy.
2. Encourage Angelenos to celebrate the many contributions of Edward James Olmos by screening his film appearances and productions, as well as volunteering in causes close to his values.

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