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In Remembrance of Jose Campos Torres

Following the humble and heartfelt apology by Houston Police Department Chief Troy Finner to the mother of Jose Campos Torres, now is the time to commemorate the significance of his murder in a tangible and visible way.

Forty-four years ago, Jose Campos Torres was brutally beaten by HPD officers and thrown into Buffalo Bayou to drown.

Just as the death of George Floyd has elevated Police Reform, Jose's death also brought focus to the pervasive abuse by HPD at the time. His murder was a spectacular example of violent police incidents that were not uncommon in 1977.

Houston is a different place today. Jose's murder eventually set a new course of police reform for HPD. Today's Houston Police Force reflects the diversity of this city, and despite a previous history of brutality and discrimination, HPD has made earnest attempts to address racism and equity within their ranks, as well as a commitment to building positive relationships with all communities in our famously diverse city.

We have a responsibility to seize a timely opportunity that has presented itself. Now is the time to create a permanent memorial for Jose Campos Torres at a beautiful location near the site of his death. It will be a healing place that honors the value of a human life, helps people understand what happened here, and tells a story that moves our city forward.

Buffalo Bayou Partnership and the Houston Parks Board have led the effort to develop scenic and well-designed pedestrian and bikeway trails all along Houston's bayous. The trailhead where Buffalo Bayou Trail meets the future bikeway trail on Austin Street, is just such a place.

The specific location of this historic site carries great significance, especially for the Latino Community, and provides a tangible opportunity to mark the death of Jose Campos Torres in a positive way.

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