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**Media Contact:**  
Wendy Celaya  
Wendy.Celaya@dlanc.com  
213.462-7328

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**City of LA to Memorialize LGBTQIA+ Civil Rights Pioneers  
Cooper Do-nuts/Nancy Valverde Square in Downtown LA**

**Los Angeles, CA (June 2023).** A motion proposed by the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (DLANC) for ceremonial signage at the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Main Streets in Downtown LA to be known as “Cooper Do-nuts/Nancy Valverde Square” has received full Los Angeles City Council approval.

Cooper Do-nuts, formerly located at 213 S Main Street in Downtown Los Angeles, was a safe space in the 1950s for gender non-conforming individuals who were seen as violating Los Angeles Municipal Ordinance 5022, otherwise known as “the anti-masquerading law.” Cooper Do-nuts not only accepted gender non-conforming individuals as patrons but gave them employment when other businesses would not, at the risk of potentially losing their business license.

Nancy Valverde, a student at Moler Barber School (in the same block as Cooper Do-nuts) was a masculine presenting woman who was routinely arrested for violating Ordinance 5022 for wearing men’s pants and suspected of being lesbian. One arrest resulted in her incarceration for three months, without due process, in the Lincoln Heights Jail. In 1951, with the help of a clerk at the LA County Law Library, Nancy found rulings that supported her defense that wearing men’s clothing was not a crime. Nancy’s tenacity led to ending the enforcement of Ordinance 5022 against gender non-conforming persons.

On May 24, 2023 the Los Angeles City Council Public Works Committee unanimously approved the motion proposed by DLANC and other community partners to memorialize Cooper Do-nuts and Nancy Valverde in the Historic Core neighborhood of Downtown Los Angeles as “Cooper

Do-nuts/Nancy Valverde Square” at the intersection of 2nd and Main Streets. The motion then went to full City Council for a vote on Wednesday, June 7, 2023 where it received unanimous approval. A public ceremony celebrating installation of the signage will occur at 2nd and Main Streets on Saturday, June 24 at 11:00am.

Civil Rights for LGBTQIA+ people are again under attack with over 600 pieces of anti-LGBTQ legislation being introduced across the US this year alone. Nancy Valverde, now 92 years old and terminally ill, was a pioneer of her time who fought laws similar to those we’re seeing passed today.

“Nancy Valverde is the Rosa Parks of the LGBTQIA+ community. She championed LGBTQIA+ civil rights in Los Angeles but more specifically the rights of gender non-conforming individuals. Official recognition of LGBTQIA+ history is woefully underrepresented in Los Angeles and in the American Story. Cooper Do-nuts / Nancy Valverde Square will be a major step forward in correcting this oversight” said outgoing DLANC Area Wide Business Director and Treasurer, Tony Hoover, who initiated the motion.

“As a woman and advocate, I can relate to Nancy Valverde’s seek for justice. It makes me proud to see the city honor a woman of courage and memorialize an important LGBTQIA+ movement that occurred in the 1950’s. This is the reason why local government is so important and crucial for pushing inclusivity in the city,” says DLANC President Claudia Oliveira.

“Memorializing their strength and resilience in the face of injustice is the American thing to do. Thank you to the City of Los Angeles.” said LA Pride Board Member and elected DLANC South Park Resident Director, Lawrence Carroll.

A public ceremony to name 2nd and Main Streets as “Cooper Do-nuts/Nancy Valverde Square” is expected to be held in late June during Pride month. Nancy Valverde is expected to accept the honor in person. Keith Evans, the nephew of Jack and Marge Evans, founders of Cooper Do-nuts, is also expected to attend. The ceremony will add to Downtown LA’s ongoing LGBTQIA+ Pride events including DTLA Proud’s annual celebration in August.

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#### ABOUT:

As an advisory body of the City of Los Angeles, the mission of the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (DLANC) is to connect people closer to their City government. DLANC advocates for our community on important issues such as land-use development, homelessness resources, and livability and quality of life. Our goal is to provide an innovative forum for all community stakeholders to contribute to a healthy, vibrant, and inclusive Downtown.

For more information, visit [www.dlanc.com](http://www.dlanc.com)

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