

Lucky Baldwin's legacy extends throughout the state

By Brenda Gazzar, San Gabriel Valley

ARCADIA – More than a century after his death, a descendant of Arcadia founder Elias J. “Lucky” Baldwin hopes to commission and donate a larger-than-life bronze statue of the colorful businessman to the city for public display.

Baldwin's great, great, great granddaughter Margaux Viera of Pasadena wants to donate a statue of the prominent investor and racetrack founder to the city as a tribute to his life and significance to Arcadia history.

The City Council, which is scheduled to consider the issue tonight, must agree to provide a location for the proposed statue, purchase a pedestal and provide any electrical, lighting and landscaping deemed appropriate.

“I think it's long overdue,” Viera, 34, said. “He was the founder of that area – the land extended farther than Arcadia. He really made Arcadia what it is today. He's the first mayor (of the city) as well ... A lot of the young generation might know his name but they might not know of everything he's done for that immediate area and for all of California.”

Mayor Gary Kovacic, who was recently approached by Viera about the matter, said he thought the proposed statue and its proposed location at the rose garden adjacent to Arcadia Community Center were wonderful ideas.

Baldwin “played obviously a significant role in our (city's) creation and development; he was a historical figure,” Kovacic said. “I think it's important to recognize and honor our history.”

The city currently has a statue of a World War I soldier at Arcadia County Park and a statue of the family of Hugo Reid, one of the area's earliest settlers deeded the land by the Spanish government, at the Arcadia Historical Museum. A Lucky Baldwin statue, he said, would serve to complement the Reid statue as far as significant historic figures in town, Kovacic said.

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