



November 3, 2023

To Whom it may Concern:

It has come to our attention that the University of Texas at Austin intends to demolish the University Junior High (UJH) Building and with it, the “Heart and Soul”, mural by celebrated Texas muralist Raul Valdez. This work of art by the renown Hispanic muralist has graced the interior of the School of Social Work and inspired its student and faculty since 1995.

Artist and Vietnam veteran, Raul Valdez, has created iconic murals and art installations that reflect Chicano culture and Mexican history in Austin and the State of Texas for more than 55 years. His work originated as creative activism and expanded to reflect justice and evolving themes liken to those of the famous muralists of the Mexican Revolution. The “Heart and Soul” mural has been the subject of documentaries and other tributes to the Hispanic muralist artist over the years.

This mural is now threatened with destruction along with the UJH building constructed in 1933 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001 for being the first racially integrated public middle school in Austin. Now the UJH and the Raul Gonzalez building, named for the first Hispanic Supreme Court Justice in Texas, is slated for demolition due to the expansion of the football program footprint. LULAC recognizes that preservation of the buildings is not realistic.

However, LULAC urges the University of Texas to pursue every option to save the Raul Valdez mural by removing it from the current structure and displaying it in an equally prominent location on campus where the academic community, particularly students, can appreciate the art form and the messages conveyed. As the premier public state university in the State, it is incumbent on the University of Texas to lead by example and preserve icons created by minority artists. This mural, reflecting Chicano and Mexican culture and history, is of particular significance to LULAC members, Hispanics and all Texans.

Please contact me at (512-426-1568) or GLEalLaw@sbcglobal with any questions. Thank you.

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About LULAC

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization in the United States. LULAC's mission is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health, and civil rights of the Hispanic population in the United States.

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