



Memorandum

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Mayor Sam Liccardo

**SUBJECT: PROCLAMATION AND FLAGS
AT HALF-STAFF HONORING
NORMAN MINETA**

DATE: May 4, 2022

APPROVED:

DATE: 5/4/22

RECOMMENDATION

Approve a Proclamation and Retroactively Authorize Flags at City Facilities be Flown at Half-Staff from May 3 – 10, 2022 in Honor of Former U.S. Secretary of Transportation and San José Mayor Norman Mineta.

BACKGROUND

Norman Y. Mineta was born in San José, and at ten years old, was uprooted with his Japanese-American immigrant family to an internment camp in Heart Mountain, Wyoming during World War II. After the war, Mineta graduated from San Jose High School, and then from the University of California, Berkeley. In 1967, he became the first person of color to serve on the San Jose City Council in its 117-year history. In 1971, he was elected the Mayor of San José, becoming the first Asian-American Mayor to lead a major city in the United States. In 1974, Mineta won the congressional seat, which he held for 20 years, and secured funds for Highway 237, the Guadalupe Parkway, San Jose International Airport, Santa Clara County's light-rail system, the San Jose-Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant and the Guadalupe River Park. He was known for his ability to reach across the aisle, working with Republican Senator Bob Dole as co-sponsor of the Americans with Disabilities Act, becoming one of the first members of the House to publicly support same sex marriage, and for carrying the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which provided an apology and reparations to Japanese Americans sent to internment camps during World War II. In 2000, he became the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, the first Asian American to hold a cabinet post, and in 2001, was appointed U.S. Secretary of Transportation. Mineta passed away on May 3, 2022, at the age of 90, drawing condolences and remembrances from Bay Area and national friends, colleagues and leaders.

ANALYSIS

San José has lost a great champion, and I have lost a deeply admired mentor. Norm Mineta gave me my start in public service as an 18-year-old intern in his Washington congressional office. Like so many of those fortunate to have worked with Norm, I learned enormously from his calm leadership style, his deadpan humor, and his sincere love for public service.

Norm's legacy is one steadfast defense of our civil liberties, and defense of our nation in the perilous hours of 9/11. Whenever Norm was asked about his incredible career, which took him to our nation's highest offices, he never forgot where he was from: "My favorite title was always Mr. Mayor," he'd often tell people.

The lowering of the flags to half-staff is permitted under Council Policy 2- 1, Section C, as an expression of the City's official sentiments in conjunction with official actions, ceremonial items, or proclamations of the City Council.