

(H. B. 2373)

(No. 134-2015)

(Approved July 22, 2015)

AN ACT

To name the new Fire Station of the Municipality of Río Grande after José “*Don Pepe*” Ortiz-Piñero; and for other purposes.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

José Ortiz-Piñero, known to his family, friends, and neighbors as *Don Pepe*, was born in Río Grande on January 5, 1924. His parents were *Don José Ortiz* and *Doña Petrona Piñero*. He married Ms. Matilde Dávila-Carrasquillo, with whom he had four (4) children: José, Benjamín, Nereida, and Evelyn, and one adoptive son: Joseph Ramos.

On August 21, 1950, Mr. Ortiz-Piñero joined the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps, at the time known as the Insular Fire Service. His performance in the public service and his successful career as a firefighter led him to achieve the rank of corporal.

Don Pepe was a man of many talents. He channeled his commitment to serving others through community service by founding the group “Los Bomberitos de Puerto Rico.” This group was composed of children from Río Grande and neighboring towns, and its goal was to show them the importance of serving the community as firefighters. The initiative kept the children busy in fun activities while teaching them civil responsibility principles, and kept them away from bad influences that could prove harmful to them.

On the other hand, *Don Pepe* combined entrepreneurship with art in his Mobile Photo Center, which offered his fellow townspeople the chance to conserve their memories in photographs. Such photographs had *Don Pepe*'s distinctive mark: the phrase "Puerto Rico, I love you. Don't forget me." Curiously, he could have done this without a deliberate intent to leave his mark in history.

Some of the principles that guided him in life were a commitment to public service and the virtue of giving his best to save the life and property of others. As part of his beloved job as a firefighter, he was exposed to smoke and gases that compromised his health. His condition accelerated his retirement from the Firefighters Corps and eventually led to his passing.

The legacy of this Puerto Rican must be permanently etched on our national memory. In his hometown of Río Grande, *Don Pepe* embodied the right kind of commitment to the community, and for his fellow firefighters, the perfect example of service for the protection of life and property. Therefore, it is necessary for his name to be remembered in his hometown and by his peers.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1. – The building that houses the new Fire Station of the Municipality of Río Grande is hereby named after José "*Don Pepe*" Ortiz-Piñero.

Section 2. – The Public Structures and Highways Naming Commission of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, together with the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps, shall take the necessary measures to comply with the provisions of this Act without being subject to the provisions of Act No. 99 of June 22, 1961, as amended, known as the "Public Structures and Highways Naming Commission of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Act."

Section 3. – This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following **Act No. 134-2015 (H. B. 2373)** of the **5th Regular Session** of the **17th Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico**:

AN ACT to name the new Fire Station of the Municipality of Río Grande after José “*Don Pepe*” Ortiz-Piñero; and for other purposes.

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, on this 23rd day of January, 2018.

Orlando Pagán-Ramírez
Acting Director