

January 14, 1993

38 Legislative Council Resolution #104

University of Colorado
Student Union

Sponsored by: Representative at Large Tony Ortega

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A RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION HISTORY

This proposal comes before you to express our desire to name the UMC fountain after one of the University of Colorado's illustrious alumni - Dalton Trumbo. The question might well be asked, "Why name such a prominent landmark after this particular alumnus? What has Dalton Trumbo achieve which would justify such a monument?"

The primary answer to these questions is found in the excellence and merit of Dalton Trumbo's work as a screenwriter. His absorbing, entertaining and finely-crafted screenplays rank among the best ever made in Hollywood. This talent was acknowledged by his peers in 1940 with his nomination for an Academy Award for his script dealing with women's issues, Kitty Foyle. In 1956, he was again acknowledged by the Academy, this time receiving the Oscar (under a pseudonym) for the touching children's story, The Brave One.

In addition to these films formally recognized by the Academy, Dalton Trumbo wrote films in almost every genre, many of which are considered to be classics. For example, during World War II, he wrote the adventure A Guy Named Joe, starring Spencer Tracy, the romantic melodrama, Tender Comrade, and the highly-acclaimed war film Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo with Van Johnson. His last film before the Blacklist was Our Vines Have Tender Grapes, starring Margaret O'Brien and Edward G. Robinson. During the period of the Blacklist, under assumed names, he wrote masterful "film noir" thrillers including Gun Crazy, He Ran All The Way, and The Prowler. After the Blacklist was eventually broken, Dalton Trumbo worked on such major films as Lonely Are The Brave, The Fixer and Papillon as well as Cleopatra and The Sandpiper. He even directed a feature film, his own adaptation of his major novel, Johnny Got His Gun. Not only is the original novel considered one of the best American novels of the century, but Trumbo's film version won the International Critics' Award and the Special Jury Prize at Cannes.

Yet even in a spectacular resume like this the films Spartacus and Exodus stand out, not only because they spotlight Trumbo's artistic genius but because they illuminate his political importance as well. Spartacus was such an important picture that when it was released in 1961, the newly elected president, John F. Kennedy, and his brother Robert crossed a protest line of angry citizens to see it. The Kennedys enjoyed the film, but their real purpose in

crossing those pickets was to validate and honor the massive political achievement of Dalton Trumbo, who, in receiving screen credit for Spartacus, had successfully broken the twelve-year-old Blacklist. From the very beginning, Dalton Trumbo had been a victim of the Blacklist. As a member of the famous Hollywood Ten, accused of having unsavory political affiliations during the Red Scare witch hunts, Trumbo stood with his colleagues in their affirmation of the United States' Constitution and the First Amendment. Choosing to go to jail, to suffer blacklisting rather than to "name names", the Ten stood for American values at a dark time in American history. Although a victim of the times, Trumbo refused to remain victimized and as soon as he left prison he began a single-minded effort to destroy the unconstitutional Blacklist. It is fitting that Trumbo was the first blacklisted person to receive screen credit - on Spartacus and, that same year, on Exodus - becoming, rather than a victim, a hero.

Dalton Trumbo was a man who believed in old-fashioned things. Honor, for example. Dalton Trumbo would not become an informer nor would he compromise his ideals to save himself, no matter how easy or appealing or comfortable it would have been. He believed in hard work and achievement but never at the cost of one's values and integrity. But Trumbo was also old-fashioned enough to believe in happy endings. Dalton Trumbo's story did end happily, in spite of all odds. And notwithstanding all of his other major accomplishments, it is because of his heroism, as much as for his artistic merit and historical importance that we should remember him. Dalton Trumbo was an honorable man. We should therefore honor his memory. We should make a permanent monument to this outstanding Colorado alumnus on this campus. For just as the University has remembered its other great heroes, for example Glenn Miller and Ellison Onizuka, the University should recognize Dalton Trumbo. If naming the UMC fountain is not feasible, then the University should remember him with something appropriate to his career, such as an eponymous campus film theater. (One that could show Exodus and Spartacus in 70 mm, would be particularly appropriate, for at present they cannot be seen as intended because there are no 70 mm screens in the Boulder area.) We must remember our heroes like Dalton Trumbo. We should do this because ultimately it is the only right and decent thing to do.

RESOLUTION SUMMARY

BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislative Council of the University of Colorado Student Union, THAT:

SECTION 1: The University of Colorado Student Union Legislative Council recognizes the achievements of Dalton Trumbo and endorses the naming of the UMC fountain area as the Dalton Trumbo Memorial Fountain.

SECTION 2: This resolution takes effect upon passage.

1/14/93-Passes-Legislative Council-1st Reading-Acclamation

1/21/93-Passes-Legislative Council-2nd Reading-Acclamation


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