



## Perris News

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### Pico Family and the City Celebrate Fred T. Perris Day

Carlos and Evelyn Young Pico moved to Perris in 1925 and grew up with the City.

Over the last 85 years, they and their children graded and sorted potatoes, picked walnuts and onions, worked as barbers and taxi drivers and dishwashers, sold Christmas trees, attended and graduated from Perris schools and enlisted in the armed services all while living in the City. For the last 80 years, at least one member of the family has called Perris home.

Much of the family has since located to the Temecula area and gotten involved in improving the lives of their fellow members of the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians. But the germ of that spirit of community pride took root in Perris.

It was little wonder then that the City and the Perris Valley Historical Museum honored the Picos as the Pioneer Family for 2010.

More than 80 Perris residents, elected officials and Pico family members attended the ceremony Saturday at Perris City Hall, which came during the annual celebration of Fred T. Perris Day. Perris dignitaries include Mayor Daryl Busch and City Councilmembers Joanne Evans and Mark Yarbrough. The City and Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley's office presented plaques and proclamations to the family.

"History gets lost and forgotten," Busch said. "By holding this annual celebration, we help preserve our history." Evans and Yarbrough agreed.

"We have so many newcomers to Perris that many don't know about the people who helped create the great foundation we have," Evans said. "They need to know, and this is why the City is pleased and proud to support this event."

Yarbrough said that Perris has much history to offer in its century-old buildings, like the Bank of Perris, the Southern Hotel and the California Southern Railroad Depot, all of which have been restored. But families like the Picos represent the kind of pioneer spirit that forged Perris and keeps it thriving today, he said.

"People make all the difference," he said.

A pictorial display of the Picos in Perris drew the attention of many visitors. There were pictures of the children in uniform, in family portraits and in front of their homes in the City. Several family members spoke about living in a home on Seventh Street, where they pooled their resources and purchased a seven-inch black and white television, becoming one of the first families in Perris with such a convenience. Friends would gather in chairs outside the window to watch pro wrestling on the television.

"I have fond memories of growing up in Perris," said Germaine Pico. "It was a nice small town. You didn't have to lock your doors in those days."

Milless Pico, another family member honored by the City, recalled Perris of her youth as a town "where you were all family."

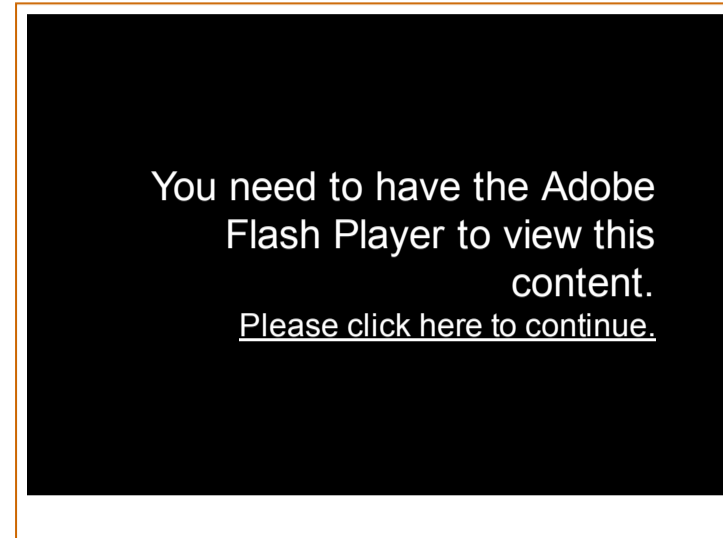
Randy Pico, who acted as a master of ceremonies during the family, said the knowledge and skills the Picos acquired in Perris helped them improve living conditions for themselves and their fellow Indians. Members of the Pico family have lobbied for Indian water and gaming rights and became tribal leaders.

"All their ideas flowed from Perris," Randy Pico said. Norman Pico, who attended Perris schools, said life was no picnic as a kid.

"We weren't the richest family but we had a lot of fun," he said. "Life was hard but we appreciated everything we had. It built good character for everybody."

Katie Keyes, who serves on the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association Board, said families like the Picos have created a priceless legacy for the City.

"We want their history," she said. "When you preserve history, you're keeping it for future generations. We want to know their memories. It helps us understand how they changed the community and the community changed them."



Councilmembers Yarbrough, Evans and Mayor Busch present a plaque to Norman Pico, a member of the pioneer Perris family.



Mayor Daryl Busch addresses the crowd of more than 80 well-wishers who attended the ceremonies at the annual Fred T. Perris Day.



Photos help tell the story of the Pico-Young family in Perris.