

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
AUGUST 28, 2017
APPLICATION FOR A NAME CHANGE FOR A HISTORIC LANDMARK
C14H-1989-0022
Ruggles-Smith House
1600 Rio Grande Street

PROPOSAL

The property owner requests that his name be added to the name of the house – from the Ruggles-Smith House to the Ruggles-Smith-Olian House.

PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

Mo Olian has owned the Ruggles-Smith house since July 30, 1974, and applied to designate the house as a historic landmark in 1989. He has owned the house for fully one-third of the history of the house, and has demonstrated significance in Austin's history. Mo first made headlines in 1961, when as student body president, he wrote a letter to the Board of Regents criticizing their decision to not integrate the university's dormitories and intercollegiate athletic facilities. The Board of Regents felt that the University had gone "farther than the citizens of the state would have approved" in integrating the campus, and demanded an apology from Mo Olian. Mo stood his ground and refused to apologize for the letter.

Mo then ran for a seat in the Texas House of Representatives in the late 1960s, but was defeated. He campaigned on a progressive platform, but was defeated. He ran again in 1972, but withdrew from the race.

Mr. Olian has been very active in many civic and philanthropic activities in Austin over the years, and his contributions to the Austin community have been recognized. He has been an active voice in preserving Austin's history, and has been a steady steward of the Ruggles-Smith House for 43 years. He hosted the only reunion of UT student body presidents at the house in conjunction with the UT Centennial in 1983.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Commission has no set policy for naming historic properties. The general practice has been to recognize the original owner along with subsequent owners of consequence with associations to the property within the historic period (50 years ago).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Consider a policy that might permit a name change if the change would recognize an owner of significance during the historic period, or the significance of a later owner during the historic period.

Olían Asks 'Backbone' For Laws

Maurice (Mo) Olían, State Representative candidate from Travis and Burnet counties, told a coffee gathering Monday that "we must have the backbone to pass strong legislation that will assure public confidence in all our elected officials."

Speaking on "Ethics in Government," Olían outlined three specific steps at the coffee, held in the South Austin home of Mr. and Mrs. John Barger, 1807-A Blue Crest.

"We must have legislation that stops legislator-attorneys from practicing for pay before state agencies. This influence peddling must be halted," Olían declared.

Public disclosure of all sources of income of all elected state officials "is a necessary step" Olían said. "This is a price that a person who chooses to enter public life must pay."

Olían also called for strict enforcement of the Open Meetings Act which was passed by the last session of the legislature. "Meetings which are supposed to be held in public still are being held behind closed doors throughout Texas," Olían explained, and "the public's right to know must be upheld."

Austin Statesman
April 16, 1968

Candidate Olian Quits Race Before Stunned Supporters

Maurice "Mo" Olian pulled out of his Travis County legislative race Friday night because, he said, he has too much pride to take on an added burden which might stop him from doing a job well done for his state, his family and his business.

Olian and his wife Linda made the announcement before a stunned audience of some 400 supporters at a reception at the Sheraton-Crest Hotel.

"Not too many hours ago, Linda and I decided we simply would be deeply grateful for your help and will remember it for a long, long time to come," Olian said, "but at least for 1972 I will revert to what I told many of you all along — I will not be a candidate, regardless of the circumstances, politically."

The 33-year-old insurance executive had gotten into the race for Place 2 less than a week ago, saying that "if citizens of integrity and moral strength won't participate now, we have no remaining choice but to be governed by the politicians."

The place is the seat held now by Republican Rep. Maurice Angly who is giving up the job to run for state treasurer. Olian's withdrawal leaves three Democrats running in their primary: Durwood Curlee, Hugh Hornsby and Felix Higgings.

Olian, whose first political victory came 10 years ago when he led the independents back to the student body presidency at the University of Texas, was narrowly defeated for the House in 1968 by Rep. Harold Davis.

"I don't want to disappoint a single one of you by my not doing my public job well," Olian told the reception audience which included many county officials and a sprinkling of state officials and legislators. "But, if all of you are to retain your present enthusiasm and confidence insofar as the type of public job I might do in the Legislature, that too requires that I do the jobs in a truly first-class manner," he said.

"The problem is that even though each of you can help shoulder the load during the campaign on the political front, all the private responsibilities are mine alone."

He said that his insurance business — which he went into after a brief stint as a newspaperman, his college major — is increasingly suc-

cessful and he owes time and service to his clients.

He spoke with candor about his family. Olian and his wife within the past year have lost two babies.

Olian called it "perspective, priorities, and pride."

He said of his decision last week to enter the race:

"It was based simply on a combination of my disgust at

this late date with the choice or lack of choice — with a few exceptions — that we would have to choose among again this year. I am happy to say that some of those exceptions, some of those happy exceptions, are here tonight."

Olian said that in the brief time he was in the race he had been promised sufficient financial contributions and that

he was confident he could win the race — without a runoff.

After the announcement, after talking with most of his surprised friends, Olian said his decision was greeted with "reactions of surprise, of course, disappointment, a couple of words that it showed courage, but most of all, an attitude of 'Well, let's do it the next time'."

Austin American-Statesman
February 5, 1972



MAURICE OLIAN
Named chairman

Olian Named United Fund Section Chief

Insurance executive and estate planner, Maurice Olian, has been named chairman of the Life Underwriters section of the Business Division for the 1973 United Fund campaign which gets under way in September.

He has served as team captain for the UF Pacesetter Division.

Olian has been honored four times as one of Austin's five "Outstanding Young Men" and was selected as Austin's "Outstanding Young Man" in 1971.

In 1972 he was selected as one of the "Outstanding Young Men of America."

He is a qualifying member of the Million Dollar Round Table and recipient of the National Quality Award given by the National Association of Life Underwriters, and a member of the Estate Planning Council of Central Texas.

Austin American-Statesman
August 25, 1973