



# Fontana Unified School District

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## MEDIA ADVISORY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Fontana Unified Set to Start 2025-26 School Year, Officially Unveil Renamed O'Day Short Elementary

**WHAT:** Fontana Unified will start the 2025-26 school year, welcoming more than 30,000 students back to campus on Wednesday, Aug. 6. The new academic year marks the beginning of a new era for O'Day Short Elementary School – previously known as Randall Pepper Elementary – as it officially opens under its new name in honor of the O'Day Short Family, which is remembered for breaking Fontana's color barrier 80 years ago.

The O'Day Short family purchased and built a home on a five-acre lot at Randall and Pepper avenues in Fontana at a time when African-Americans were forbidden to live south of Baseline Avenue. The family received threats of violence before their house was set ablaze on Dec. 16, 1945. All four members of the African-American family – father O'Day, mother Helen, and children Carol Ann and Barry Short died from injuries sustained in the fire, which was later determined to be caused by arson. The school was built on the same site in 1950.

**WHEN:** **Wednesday, Aug. 6**  
8 – 11 a.m.

**WHERE:** O'Day Short Elementary School  
16613 Randall Ave., Fontana

**DETAILS:** The Fontana Unified Board of Education unanimously approved the renaming of the school to O'Day Short Elementary in September 2024, following a petition submitted by District middle school student Cyrus Moss in March 2024. The District will host an official renaming ceremony at O'Day Short Elementary on Tuesday, Aug. 5, from 10 a.m. to noon.

To schedule interviews or ensure staff availability during your visit, please contact Andrew Shortall at [andrew.shortall@vmapr.com](mailto:andrew.shortall@vmapr.com) or (909) 204-6013 in advance.

**Coverage and/or inclusion of this event in your calendar of events is welcome and greatly appreciated.**

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