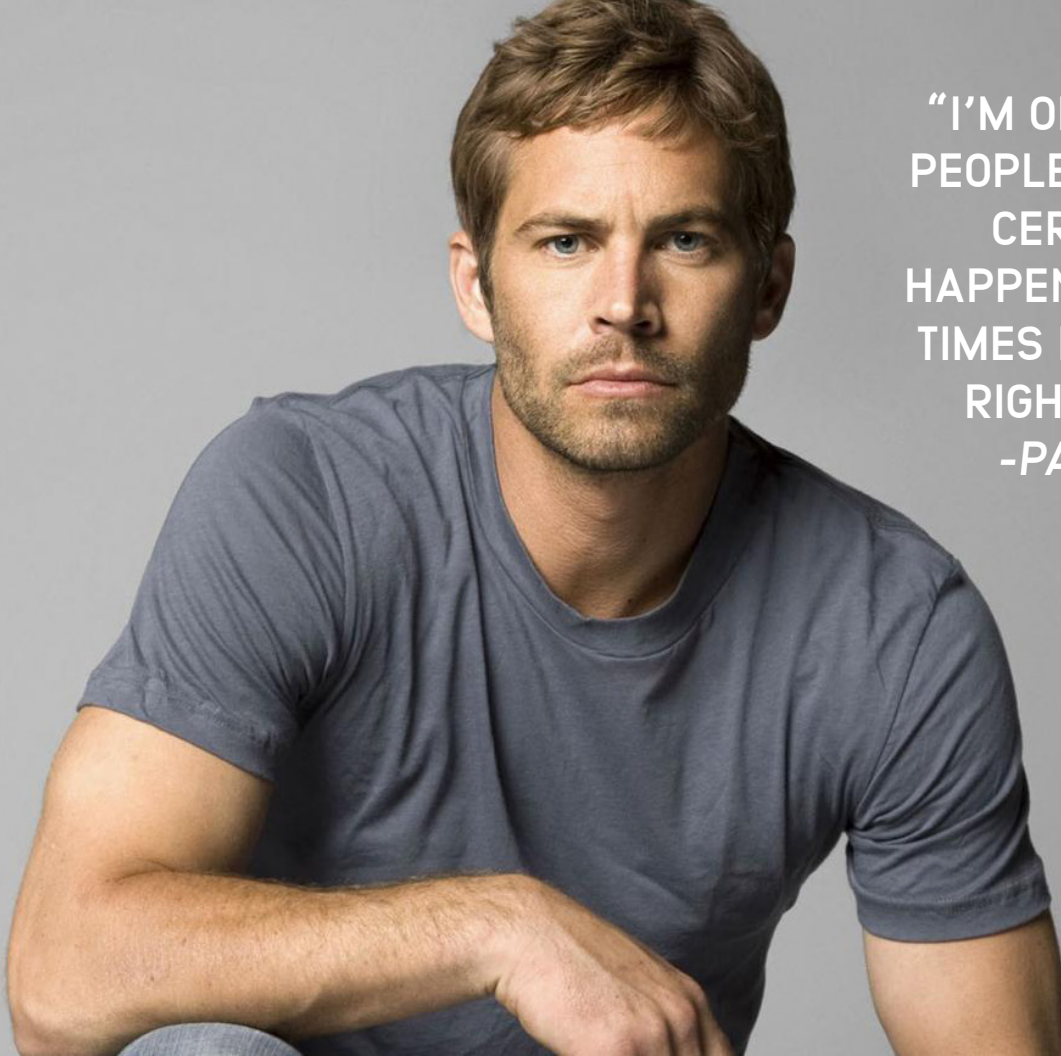




WHY SAN CLEMENTE SHOULD BUILD A TWELVE-FOOT STATUE OF PAUL WALKER



“I’M ONE OF THOSE
PEOPLE THAT THINK
CERTAIN THINGS
HAPPEN AT CERTAIN
TIMES FOR ALL THE
RIGHT REASONS.”
-PAUL WALKER

San Clemente is a small beach town located at the southern border of Orange County. It is a small surfing community that has made incredible efforts to be an example to others of being a kind, selfless community that comes together during hard times to keep spreading light to all they can. In each town that has a community of people that are trying to come together to embrace kindness and service, it is important to have a person to look to as an example or reminder of why they are doing what they are doing. For the town of San Clemente it has been important to find a leading example of someone who was one of their own, who dedicated their life to not only serving others, but to putting the most important things first in their life. Three local freelance journalists from the San Clemente community searched for that fortifying figure, the person the people should look to, and they concluded that Paul Walker was the perfect fit for the role.

The three journalists found that in order to truly inspire the people of the community, it would be essential to have a constant physical reminder of their

role model and their influence located in a place that the community gathers most often. That is how Chad Kroger, Bohdi Johnson, and JT Parr came to the conclusion that the community needed a 12-foot statue of Paul Walker on the San Clemente pier. When trying to bring communities together through public role models, especially in the form of a statue, it is important to understand all the facets of why and how behind the initiatives. This article will cover the following topics in order to better exemplify why the building of the statue is important for the community and how this idea can become a reality:

- Why we need a statue of Paul Walker.
- The timeline of proposing for a Paul Walker statue.
- How the statue will be built.

These sections will help give a better understanding of the history behind the idea of the statue, the person Paul Walker was, and how a statue of Paul Walker can help benefit the city of San Clemente.

WHY WE NEED A STATUE OF PAUL WALKER

Difficult times are plaguing American culture as families and communities are drifting apart at catastrophic rates.¹ As Americans we must do all we can to bring our communities closer together in order to stop the division that so often tears our towns apart. San Clemente is a small-town community in the heart of Southern California that embodies what it means to be a part of the Californian small-town lifestyle. As the division continues to spread,² all efforts must be made to bring everyone together—and a statue of Paul Walker could do just that.

When trying to find a unifying figure to unite a community, it is imperative to find someone who all of the people of the town can relate to in some way or another, yet look to as someone who lived an exemplary life. Paul Walker was born and raised in California and throughout his busy life as an actor had found solace in the surf community.³ Many people throughout Orange County recognized him as a down-to-earth, welcomed member of the surf community. Paul Walker related to many of the people of Orange County due to his similar interests, but it was his character and outstanding personal morals that really allowed him to find his home in this community.

When Chad Kroger, Bodhi Johnson, and JT Parr suggested a statue of Paul Walker being built, their main reasoning was due to his similarities to the community and his outstanding morals that helped shed light on the darkening world.⁴ Paul Walker was not chosen because he was involved heavily in politics, or because he was an advocate for radical change, he was chosen by these journalists to be the role model of the community because of the simple, yet grounded life he led. In a time where Americans are divided on so many things politically and morally, it is important to find a role model who can inspire each person of the community without causing exponential contention. A statue of Paul Walker would not favor one political party or ideology, instead it would be a statue that would help heal the pain that exists in our nation and unify the community of San Clemente.



Father Beck of Saint Edmunds Church sheds light on the importance of statues by explaining that, “Statues do have a message:...For Catholics, statues, like icons, are windows into heaven; they are not primarily works of art or reminders of history, but cultic objects, designed to help us pray.”⁵

Although not all statues are religious in nature, it is important to realize that statues are built in order to help people look introspectively and reflect on how they can better live their lives. Dr. NicGhabhann explains that, “Monuments do much more than just signify specific histories: they structure our everyday physical, emotional and social experience of place and identity in the way that they are woven into our daily lives and routines.”⁶

Father Beck continues on to clarify that statues aren’t just static history lessons, instead they have deeper meaning. For Catholics it is about getting closer to heaven. For the citizens of San Clemente, it is about coming together as a community with the help of a statue of man whose life reflected qualities that the citizens of San Clemente strive for.

The city website of San Clemente states that the city's core values are focused on service with integrity, respect, and excellence.⁷ The image below encompasses the main values of the San Clemente community. In a *TIME* article that reflected on the five-year anniversary of Paul Walker's death, the article speaks about how Walker dedicated his life to service. "When a massive earthquake hit in Haiti in 2010, [Paul] organized a relief team and flew there to help. He then started his own organization, Reach Out Worldwide, now run by Cody [his brother], which helps get resources to post-disaster situations."⁸ Paul's focus on service towards others is exactly in harmony with the core values of the city of San Clemente.



Source: San Clemente City Website

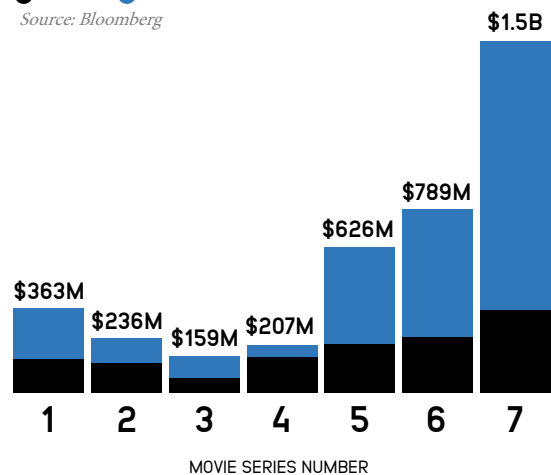
Walker's life breathed nothing but integrity and kindness. Mentioned in the same *TIME* magazine article, "He was all about kindness and love. Walker's father remembers his son would give away Christmas presents to needier kids." He was a man who valued family and the more important things in life. He tried to live right by living authentically all while building his relationships with his family and loved ones. The way Paul lived his life fulfilled part of the San Clemente Mission Statement that states, "A balanced community committed to protection of what is valued today while meeting tomorrow's needs." Because Paul Walker never sought the spotlight and was thinking of the greater good, he contributed to his community and always brought balance to any community he was a part of.

Not only will the statue of Paul Walker help unify the community, there are also other benefits that could come from the building of the statue on the pier. Because of Paul Walker's involvement in the seven-part *Fast and Furious* movie series, which has gained over 3.88 billion in box-office revenue and positive reviews from critics and audiences,⁹ as seen on the graphs on the right the town of San Clemente could benefit from the 12-foot statue of Paul Walker on the pier by the potential rise in publicity and tourism.

BOX-OFFICE REVENUE

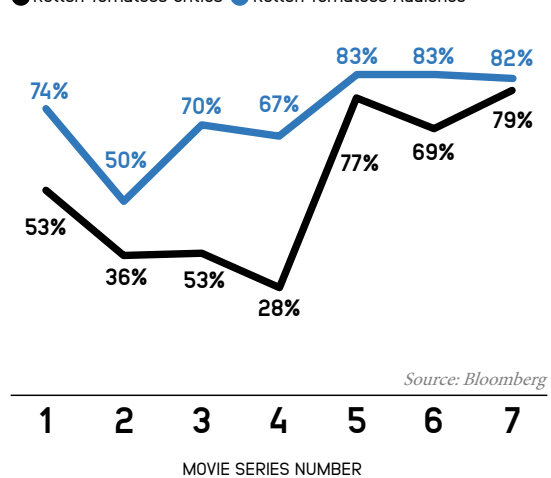
● Domestic ● International

Source: Bloomberg



CRITICAL AND AUDIENCE ACCLAIM

● Rotten Tomatoes Critics ● Rotten Tomatoes Audience



Source: Bloomberg

Because of the fame and success of the *Fast and Furious* franchise, the town could increase tourism which would help build the economy just as the Rocky statue in Philadelphia increased tourism by "attracting tens of thousands of sightseers and photographers every year".¹⁰

Paul Walker lived a life that was focused on kindness and service to others. Because of his influence and kind heart, it would be beneficial for the city to have a constant reminder of how to achieve their community goals of creating a place of integrity and respect by having a statue of Walker on the pier. A statue of Paul Walker would be a powerful inspiration and reminder for the citizens of San Clemente of how they can shed light on an ever-darkening world by giving of their time to serving those in need and focusing on the things that matter most in life, just as Paul Walker did.

THE TIMELINE OF PROPOSING A PAUL WALKER STATUE

Getting approvals for public statues and memorials can at times be a long and arduous process. The approval for the Paul Walker statue initiative has been no exception to this difficult process. The local, freelance journalists began the process in March 2017 and have continued since trying to gain approval for the statue. The process began as follows:

THE FIRST ATTEMPT.

Chad Kroger, a local freelance journalist of California, went to the San Clemente City Council in March 2017 to give a proposal that would help unify the city, the state, the country, and possibly the world. He proposed that a 12-foot statue of Paul Walker be built on the San Clemente pier.

Chad approached the podium to speak and he began by mentioning how there is a major divide in America. He said that times have been difficult and that the people of San Clemente needed to join together and find a unifying figure to look to in order to bring them together. Chad then proposed that Paul Walker be that unifying figure for the city of San Clemente.

“Detroit has the Robocop. Philly has Rocky. We need Paul Walker. That is why I’m proposing that the city erect a 12-foot tall steel statue of Paul Walker on the pier,” Chad proceeded to bear strong testimony about how Paul Walker helped him through his adolescence and gave him courage to ask a girl out. In response councilman Tim Brown said, “I am a big fan of Paul Walker. Don’t get me wrong. Yeah...but no.” However, Councilperson Lori Donchak commented, “Your point is we need an inspiring figure and that’s a very powerful message.”

Bodhi Johnson, another freelance journalist, stood after Chad and expressed how times were difficult and how a statue of Paul Walker could help heal society and bring people together. Bodhi offered a second witness to Chad about the necessity of a Paul Walker statue. The council again gave warm regards to their kindness, but nothing was taken seriously.

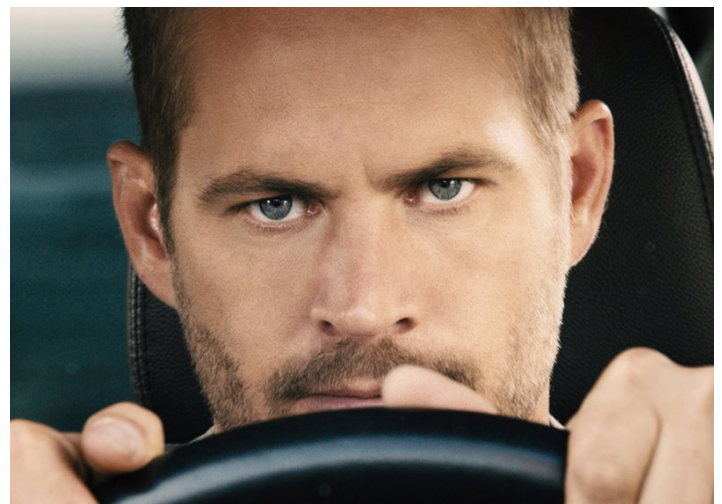
However, a few months later, councilman Tim Brown attempted to pay homage to Chad’s pleas by presenting the city of San Clemente with a one-foot statue of Paul Walker that was purchased off eBay. This was appreciated by Chad and Bodhi, but a one-foot statue was not enough to celebrate the greatness and positive influence of Paul Walker.¹¹

THE SECOND ATTEMPT.

August 2017. Chad Kroger returned. This time he was with another Paul Walker enthusiast, activist, and local freelance journalist, JT Parr.¹² They both returned with a renewed sense of vigor to persuade the council of the necessity of a Paul Walker statue. Chad and JT explained to the council that they appreciated the one-foot statue of Paul Walker, but it wasn’t enough to pay full respect to his character and influence.

THE CONTINUING FIGHT.

Almost two years have passed since the initial introduction of the Paul Walker statue initiative and Chad and JT are still in the pursuit of fulfilling that initiative. They have taken further steps by going to PolitiCon, a non-partisan political convention, to speak with various political leaders of California in order to bring their attention to their statue proposal.¹³ Chad and JT also appeared on FOX national news to briefly speak about the statue and its importance.¹⁴



HOW THE STATUE WILL BE BUILT

Although the initial process of getting a statue approved has been difficult, once the approval takes place there will be necessary steps to make the statue building a reality.

STEP 1: PRESENT TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF SAN CLEMENTE.

Presenting to the council is an important step in this process. This would be the third time the council will be hearing this message and there needs to be a strong point of difference. The point of difference is that there are concrete numbers of what it will take to build and maintain the statue and different options for funding if the city does not want to be financially involved.

STEP 2: GAIN THE FUNDING FOR THE TWELVE-FOOT STATUE OF PAUL WALKER.

The most likely way the city of San Clemente will get the statue of Paul Walker will be through private funding. Matt Glenn, of the company Big Statues, gave a quote for a bronze 12-foot statue of Paul Walker and said that it would be \$125,000.¹⁵ While this at first appears to be a large number, only 12,500 people would need to donate \$10 dollars to get the statue funding. With the amount of fans the Fast & Furious franchise has generated, this could be accomplished

easily. Due to the high figure, it would be best if the statue were funded privately but was approved to be on the city pier by the city of San Clemente. It would be beneficial for the city of San Clemente to take responsibility of maintaining the statue.

STEP 3: BUILD THE TWELVE-FOOT STATUE OF PAUL WALKER

A possible candidate to build the statue of Paul Walker would be Orange County native, Matt Glenn. Glenn has been making statues for over 15 years for both municipalities and private organizations. After Glenn builds the statue, he would help provide the directions of how to get the statue properly mounted and placed on the pier.

STEP 4: HAVE MAINTENANCE OF THE STATUE

Consultation with Matt Glenn would need to take place before the statue is built to see what is required of maintaining a bronze statue of that size. The statue will require maintenance of cleaning and inspection to make sure it is in proper condition and is accepted under all safety regulations. This will work most effectively if this task would fall under the jurisdiction of the San Clemente Parks and Recreation department.



CONCLUSION

A statue of Paul Walker would benefit the city of San Clemente in many ways. But most importantly, a statue of Paul Walker would allow for the members of the community to come together and look to a unifying local figure that led a selfless, inspirational life.

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