

CITY OF FRESNO

Office of Council Vice President Tyler Maxwell & Councilmember Nick Richardson

Hereby Recognizes:

Rhyen Simon Valdez
1997 - 2026

WHEREAS, Rhyen Simon Valdez lived with an open heart and a deep sense of purpose, giving freely of himself in service to his country, the people he loved, and every community he proudly called home; and

WHEREAS, born on May 6, 1997, in Fresno, California, and raised in Selma, Rhyen graduated from Selma High School in 2015, where ROTC first gave shape to the call to service that would guide his life; and

WHEREAS, Rhyen carried that call into the United States Army as a 19D Cavalry Scout from 2016 to 2022, performing reconnaissance in a role that depended upon the trust of those beside him and deepened his lifelong devotion to serving others and standing beside anyone who needed him; and

WHEREAS, serving in South Korea and Germany with Fort Hood as his home station, Rhyen rose to the rank of sergeant, becoming a noncommissioned officer and guiding the soldiers entrusted to his leadership; and

WHEREAS, after his Army service, Rhyen completed his studies in history at Fresno State and prepared to become a high school history teacher, hoping not only to share his lifelong love of history but to also inspire the next generation of students and changemakers and help them learn who they wanted to become; and

WHEREAS, Rhyen embraced campus life, taking every opportunity to learn, compete, connect, and contribute as a proud member of Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity, the Fresno State Rugby Club, the Student Veteran Organization, the Fresno State Esports Club, and the Fresno State Taekwondo Club, and across every team and club he brought sportsmanship, natural warmth, and a genuine desire to help others find their place and feel part of something shared; and

WHEREAS, Rhyen met life with a gentle spirit and joyful curiosity, proudly embracing his many interests, pursuing his ambitions with purpose, and finding happiness in history, gaming, family traditions, laughter, and every new experience he could share with his loved ones; and

WHEREAS, above every title, achievement, and uniform, Rhyen was the deeply beloved son of Simon Valdez Jr. and Angelica Ramirez; a cherished brother to Jennifer and Natalie Valdez; a devoted uncle to Patrick Ethan and Luca; a loving godfather and Nono to Naya Bree; a best friend to Preston Carpenter; and a man whose presence, encouragement, and example will remain in the hearts of all who knew him; and

WHEREAS, Rhyen passed away on May 14, 2026, at the age of 29, and the City of Fresno now pauses to honor and celebrate his life and memory, expressing profound gratitude for his service to our nation, admiration for his dedication to education and community, and deepest sympathy to his family, friends, fellow soldiers, classmates, colleagues, and all those whose lives were made better by knowing him. May his kindness, laughter, strength, and love for others endure as his lasting legacy in every life he touched.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we, Mayor Jerry P. Dyer, and the Fresno City Council, do hereby proclaim Thursday, August 13, 2026, as:

“Rhyen Simon Valdez Day”
in the City of Fresno

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and affixed the Great Seal of the City of Fresno, California, this 13th day of August of the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Six.

JERRY P. DYER, Honorable Mayor

TYLER MAXWELL, Council Vice President

NELSON ESPARZA, Council President

ANNALISA PEREA, Councilmember, District 1

MIKE KARBASSI, Councilmember, District 2

MIGUEL ARIAS, Councilmember, District 3

BRANDON VANG, Councilmember, District 5

NICK RICHARDSON, Councilmember, District 6