

**BY ROBERT S. HAMPTON, THE STARPHOENIX FEBRUARY 23, 2012**

Nothing can be more polarizing in a community than an issue that is viewed as a wrong that also belittles the legacy of a civic legend. Such is the essence of the Mendel Art Gallery issue. There never was a debate or discussion - everything was decided behind closed doors by those wishing to create their own legacy.

Now these same supporters of the Mendel's demise have spent \$23,000 for a poll justifying a new gallery.

This was money well wasted, as the decision to move the gallery was a made many years back and there was nothing short of River Landing sliding into the river that could have stopped it. I have yet to see any study that didn't uphold the views of those footing the bills. This makes the Fast study meaningless to those seeking the truth.

I give the board credit for being good soldiers and sticking to the party line for the last three years.

Mayor Don Atchison first suggested a move in 2005. Since then the director and board have been replaced and reshaped. The new appointments have been eager to jump on the mayor's bandwagon, completely backtracking from all previous plans for the Mendel expansion. Protests seem futile because the people who are building this new gallery will always have their justifications along with the facts and figures to support them.

Whatever they come up with, however, people should know that they are wrong and their name on a bronze plaque is no substitute for honesty, integrity and respect.

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