

INTRODUCED: March 11, 2024

AN ORDINANCE No. 2024-080

To designate that portion of East 32nd Street located between its intersection with Midlothian Turnpike and its intersection with McRand Street in honor of the late Frank J. Wilkins, Sr.

Patron – Ms. Lynch

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: MAR 25 2024 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, Frank John Wilkins, Sr., a native of Baltimore, Maryland, resided in the city of Richmond for over 60 years and was a resident of the Swansboro community; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, Frank John Wilkins, Sr., was an active community leader, ministered to the sick and homeless, mentored youth, advocated for community schools, organized Neighborhood Watch activities, and sponsored neighborhood social gatherings; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to honor the life of Frank John Wilkins, Sr., for his service to

AYES: 8 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: MAR 25 2024 REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

the community and contributions to the Swansboro community and the residents of the city of Richmond by designating that portion of East 32nd Street located between its intersection with Midlothian Turnpike and its intersection with McRand Street in his honor; and

WHEREAS, because this designation is honorary only, the provisions of sections 8-7 through 8-10 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, do not apply to the designation made hereby or to any signs erected pursuant to this ordinance;

NOW, THEREFORE,

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

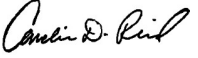
§ 1. **Designation of Street Block for Honorary Name.** The portion of East 32nd Street located between its intersection with Midlothian Turnpike and its intersection with McRand Street shall be designated as “Frank J. Wilkins, Sr. Way” in honor of Frank J. Wilkins, Sr., pursuant to this ordinance.

§ 2. **Effect of Designation.** The designation of the portion of the street made pursuant to this ordinance shall be honorary only, shall not replace the existing name of the street, and shall have no effect on the address of any property with an address on the designated street block. The sole effect of designation pursuant to this ordinance shall be to authorize the placement of commemorative signs in accordance with this ordinance memorializing the designation in honor of the named person.

§ 3. **Administration of Ordinance.** The Department of Public Works shall implement this ordinance by installing, as soon as practicable after the adoption of this ordinance, and maintaining commemorative signs in accordance with this section. The commemorative signs shall be clearly distinct from the street signs used to identify the portion of the street in question such that a reasonable person could not conclude that the commemorative signs reflect the actual

name of the street. The commemorative signs (i) shall be affixed to a sign pole installed at each end of the portion of the street designation in section 1 of this ordinance for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of this section or to any existing sign identifying the portion of the street designated in section 1 of this ordinance located at each end of the portion of the street designated in section 1 of this ordinance and (ii) shall bear the name of the person as set forth in section 1 of this ordinance.

§ 4. **Effective Date.** This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.

A TRUE COPY:
TESTE:

City Clerk



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Council Ordinance/Resolution Request

TO Laura Drewry, Richmond City Attorney

THROUGH LaTasha S. Holmes, Council Chief of Staff

FROM Joyce L. Davis, Council Policy Analyst
Office of the Council Chief of Staff

COPY Stephanie Lynch, 5th District Council Member
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
Adam Poser, Deputy Council Chief of Staff
Amy Robins, 5th District Liaison

DATE February 22, 2024

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TITLE: Honorary Street/Block Naming for Frank John Wilkins, Sr.

This is a request for the drafting of an **Ordinance** **Resolution**

REQUESTING COUNCILMEMBER/PATRON

SUGGESTED STANDING COMMITTEE

Councilmember Stephanie Lynch

Land Use, Housing and Transportation

ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION SUMMARY

Ordinance request to designate the corner of "00 E. block of E. 32nd Street and Midlothian Turnpike" an honorary street/block naming for Frank J. Wilkins, Sr. The honorary sign would indicate Frank J. Wilkins, Sr. Way.

BACKGROUND

The patron is requesting an Ordinance to designate the corner of the "00 E. block of 32nd Street and Midlothian Turnpike" an honorary street/block naming for Frank J. Wilkins, Sr. The honorary block naming would start at Midlothian Turnpike and follow down to McRand Street.

This honorary block naming for Frank J. Wilkins, Sr. is in recognition of his service to the community and contributions to the city of Richmond.

Frank John Wilkins Sr., was born in 1946 in Baltimore Maryland. He lived for over 60 years in Richmond, Virginia until he departed this life September 15, 2023 at the age of 77. He was married to Ellen Jefferson Wilkins for 60 years. They have six children¹.

Mr. Wilkins was an active member of the House of Jacob in Baltimore, Maryland since childhood through adulthood. He served as Elder of the Church providing leadership for 35 years. He remained a member of The House of Jacob in Baltimore until his death. One of his ministries was to spend countless hours visiting local hospitals to pray for sick children, family, and friends. Elder Wilkins traveled to Africa for church missionary work dispensing food to villages and families.

As a member of the Swansboro community, Mr. Wilkins was very well known. During his years on East 32nd Street, he was a “Father” to many of the neighborhood children. He dedicated his life to helping others by providing a place to stay as refuge for individuals who lost their job, for families without shelter and for children experiencing problems with their parents. Mr. Wilkins mentored children in the neighborhood, especially those in need of structure and provided young people with a place to stay when they needed a different environment or to “get a new start”².

As a father of six children, he was active in the PTA and is credited with rallying the community in the late 1970’s with a march on Richmond’s City Hall to reopen Franklin Elementary School (now Swansboro Elementary). After plans were announced to close and demolish the Franklin Elementary School, Mr. Wilkins orchestrated an advocacy to retain the school. The School Board decided against demolishing the school. With the school remaining open, the Swansboro community continues to benefit from his advocacy.

Mr. Wilkins organized Neighborhood Watch activities in the Swansboro community. He worked to investigate problems in the community and helped his neighbors to navigate through the criminal justice system to report incidents. He sponsored block parties, holiday parties and gatherings for neighborhood children in the 32nd street corridor.

¹ Frank Wilkins, Sr. Obituary, Richmond Times Dispatch, September 21, 2023

² Interview on February 21, 2024 with family member, Frank Wilkins, Jr. to provide background information

In 1974, Mr. Wilkins and his son, Frank, Jr. were recognized by WRVA and featured in the Richmond Afro American newspaper for finding the missing part from the helicopter that lost control and crashed in the Swansboro neighborhood. After searching through the neighborhood³, Mr. Wilkins and his son located the missing part which helped the investigators to resolve the cause of the crash⁴.

He was an active community leader with membership in organizations such as the Richmond Shriners Mocha Temple and the Civic Association. Mr. Wilkins “retired in 2020 from Richmond Veterans Affairs Medical Center with 30 years of service. He took great pride in his work at the V.A. in his role as Reproduction Specialist. Over the years he also served with the same enthusiastic work ethic at other companies in the Richmond area, including the Richmond Sheriff Department, Universal Leaf Tobacco Company, A.H. Robins Company and the American Tobacco Company”⁵. He dedicated his time to conversations with young people about establishing character and work ethic. He used himself as an example of working hard and staying on the job teaching them the importance and value of being dependable and having consistent work ethic.

Members of the Swansboro neighborhood benefitted from his influence, example, leadership and advocacy on issues. Having the honorary street naming will allow the Richmond community to remember him and honor his contributions.

The requested date of introduction is March 11, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Fiscal Impact Yes No

Budget Amendment Required Yes No

Estimated Cost or Revenue Impact

There are costs for the production and installation of the signage at an estimated cost of \$700. Costs of signage are usually covered from DPW operating funds.

³ Frank Wilkins, Jr. Interview, Feb. 21, 2024

⁴ The Richmond Afro-American, May 28-June 1, 1974 edition

⁵ Frank Wilkins, Sr. Obituary, September 21, 2024

Attachment/s Yes No

Richmond City Council Ordinance/Resolution Request Form/updated 12.22.08/srs