

INTRODUCED: September 23, 2024

AN ORDINANCE No. 2024-257

To designate the 100 block of West Leigh Street in honor of the late William Issac Johnson, Sr.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patron – Ms. Jordan  
\_\_\_\_\_

Approved as to form and legality  
by the City Attorney  
\_\_\_\_\_

PUBLIC HEARING: NOV 12 2024 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the late William Issac Johnson, Sr., was a resident of Richmond, Virginia and lived on West Leigh Street until his passing in November of 1919; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, William Issac Johnson, Sr., served the city of Richmond as a teacher, letter carrier, and the owner and operator of the W.I. Johnson Funeral Home located at 10 West Leigh Street; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, William Issac Johnson, Sr., and his descendants operated the W.I. Johnson Funeral Home and served the residents of the Jackson Ward neighborhood and the city of Richmond until 1971; and

AYES: \_\_\_\_\_ NOES: \_\_\_\_\_ ABSTAIN: \_\_\_\_\_

ADOPTED: \_\_\_\_\_ REJECTED: \_\_\_\_\_ STRICKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, William Issac Johnson, Sr., was respected for his contributions to the Jackson Ward neighborhood and the African American population of the city of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to memorialize the life of William Issac Johnson, Sr., for his contributions to the city of Richmond by designating the 100 block of West Leigh 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 100 block of West Leigh Street shall be designated in honor of William Issac Johnson, 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 designated 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 set forth in section 1 of this ordinance.

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

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



---

CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



# 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** Will Perkins, Senior Legislative Services Manager  
Office of the Council Chief of Staff

**COPY** Katherine Jordan, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Council Member  
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney  
Sven Philipsen, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Liaison

**DATE** September 27, 2024

**PAGE/s** 2

**TITLE:** Honorary Street Block Naming for the late William Issac Johnson, Sr.

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

**REQUESTING COUNCILMEMBER/PATRON**

**SUGGESTED STANDING COMMITTEE**

Councilmember Katherine Jordan

Land Use, Housing and Transportation

**ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION SUMMARY**

Ordinance request to designate the corner of 100 W. Leigh Street and N. Adams Street an honorary street block naming for William Isaac Johnson, Sr. The sign should indicate William Issac Johnson Sr. Way.

**BACKGROUND**

The patron is requesting an Ordinance to designate the corner of 100 West Leigh at the corner of North Adams Street an honorary street block naming for William Issac Johnson, Sr. This honorary block naming for Mr. Johnson is to honor his civic and economic contributions to the City of Richmond. He was

the owner and proprietor of the W. I. Johnson Funeral Home that was located at 10 West Leigh Street – in the heart of historic Jackson Ward.

Mr. Johnson was born in 1852 in Charlotte County, Virginia before eventually moving to Richmond, Virginia. During his time in Richmond, he served the city in many professions, including as a teacher and letter-carrier, prior to becoming a funeral director.

At the turn of the century, Mr. Johnson, along with fellow funeral directors A. D. Price and Robert C. Scott provided funeral services to the city, especially to the residents of Jackson Ward. Initially business partners, eventually Mr. Johnson and Mr. Price, operated their own funeral homes, located only blocks from each other in the district. The proximity led to healthy competition and spurred innovation in the mortuary industry. Although rivals in business, the two men had mutual respect up to Mr. Johnson's death in November 1919.

During his life, Mr. Johnson also acted as a civic leader for the city and Jackson Ward. He was among a group of Richmond's African American leaders who met with President William H. Taft at the Virginia state capitol in 1909.

The W. I. Johnson Funeral Home continued after Mr. Johnson's death. Three generations of his descendants operated the business, serving Richmond residents, before closing in 1971.

The posting of this honorary sign will honor his contributions to the Jackson Ward community where the funeral home was located.

The requested date of introduction is September 23, 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.

Attachment/s Yes  No

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