

INTRODUCED: September 23, 2024

AN ORDINANCE No. 2024-257

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

Patrons – Ms. Jordan, Vice President Lambert, Ms. Robertson and Mr. Addison

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney (pending)

PUBLIC HEARING: NOV 12 AT 6 P.M.

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

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

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

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, the late William Isaac Johnson, Sr. was highly respected in his community for his contributions to Jackson Ward and the African American population of Richmond; and

AYES: 8 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: DEC 9 2024 REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

WHEREAS, the City desires to memorialize the late William Isaac Johnson, Sr. 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 (2015), 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 Isaac Johnson, Sr. pursuant to this ordinance.

§ 2. **Effect of Designation.** The designation of the street block 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 street block 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 block designated in section 1 of this ordinance for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of this section or to any existing sign identifying the road designated in section 1 of this ordinance located at each end of the block designated in section 1 of this ordinance and (ii) shall bear the name of



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 Adam Poser, Deputy Council Chief of Staff
Office of the Council Chief of Staff

COPY Katherine Jordan, 2nd District Council Member
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
Sven Philipsen, 2nd District Liaison

DATE September 16, 2024

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TITLE: Honorary Street Block Naming for the late Willian 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 Willian Isaac Johnson, Sr. The sign should indicate Willian 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 Willian 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