

INTRODUCED: June 14, 2021

AN ORDINANCE No. 2021-170

To designate the 1000, 1100, and 1200 blocks of St. James Street in honor of the late Charles Sidney Gilpin.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patrons – All Members of Council

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

PUBLIC HEARING: JUN 28 2021 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, Charles Sidney Gilpin was born on November 20, 1878, in Jackson Ward, attended St. Frances School until the age of 12, and then served as an apprentice at the Richmond Planet until 1893; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, Charles Sidney Gilpin left Richmond to join a minstrel and vaudeville show; and

WHEREAS, Charles Sidney Gilpin joined the Pekin Stock company and became best known for his roles as Remus Boreland in *The Black Politician*, Jacob McCloskey in *The Octoroon*, Reverend William Curtis in *Abraham Lincoln*, and Brutus Jones in the Broadway production of *The Emperor Jones*; and

AYES:            9            NOES:            0            ABSTAIN: \_\_\_\_\_

ADOPTED:      JUN 28 2021      REJECTED: \_\_\_\_\_      STRICKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, Charles Sidney Gilpin received many honors including being the first Black actor to be honored by the Drama League in 1920, receiving the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Spingarn Medal in 1921, being honored by President Warren G. Harding at a White House dinner, and being posthumously inducted into the American Theatre Hall of Fame in 1991; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, Charles Sidney Gilpin passed away on May 6, 1930 and was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in New York; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to memorialize Charles Sidney Gilpin's contributions to the cultural life of Jackson Ward and beyond by designating the 1000, 1100, and 1200 blocks of St. James Street in his honor as "Charles Gilpin Crossing;" 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 1000, 1100, and 1200 blocks of St. James Street shall be designated in honor of Charles Sidney Gilpin as "Charles Gilpin Crossing," pursuant to this ordinance.

§ 2. **Effect of Designation.** The designation of the 1000, 1100, and 1200 blocks of St. James Street made pursuant to this ordinance shall be honorary only, shall not replace the existing name of the road, and shall have no effect on the address of any property with an address on the designated road. The sole effect of designation pursuant to this ordinance shall be to authorize the

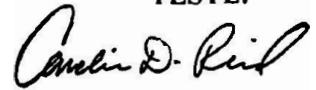
placement of commemorative signs in accordance with this ordinance memorializing the designation in honor of the named person.

§ 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 road in question such that a reasonable person could not conclude that the commemorative signs reflect the actual name of the road. The commemorative signs (i) shall be affixed to a sign pole installed at each end of the portion of the road 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 road designated in section 1 of this ordinance located at each end of the portion of the road designated in section 1 of this ordinance and (ii) shall bear the name “Charles Gilpin Crossing,” 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

### Ordinance/Resolution Request

**TO** Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney

**THROUGH** Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff

**FROM** Steven Taylor, Council Policy Analyst

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

**DATE** May 14, 2021

**PAGE/s** 1 of 2

**TITLE** Honorary Block Designation honoring Charles Gilpin

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

**REQUESTING COUNCILMEMBER/PATRON**

Jordan

**SUGGESTED STANDING COMMITTEE**

Land Use, Housing & Transportation

**ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION SUMMARY**

The patron request that legislation be drafted for Council’s consideration that designates the portion of St James Street from its intersection with Charity Street to its intersection with Hill Street, in honor of Charles Gilpin, as *Charles Gilpin Crossing*, with two signs.

**BACKGROUND**

Actor Charles Sidney Gilpin was born on November 20, 1878 in Jackson Ward. He attended St. Frances School until 12 years old. He was an apprentice at the Richmond Planet until 1893. He left Richmond to join a minstrel and vaudeville show. He is best known for his roles as Remus Boreland in *The Black Politician*, Jacob McCloskey in *The Octoroon*, Reverend William Curtis in *Abraham Lincoln*, and as Brutus Jones in the Broadway production of *The Emperor Jones*.

He joined the Pekin Stock Company. Mr. Gilpin was the first Black actor to be honored by the Drama League in 1920. He was awarded the NAACP’s Spingarn Medal in 1921. He was once honored by US President Warren G. Harding at a White House dinner. In 1991, he was

posthumously inducted into the American Theatre Hall of Fame.

Mr. Gilpin died on May 6, 1930 and is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in New York.

The biographical information given above is provided by the JXN Project.

**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Fiscal Impact Yes  No

Budget Amendment Required Yes  No

Estimated Cost or Revenue Impact \$ N/A

Note: Costs of signage erecting these honors are absorbed in the regular operations of the Department of Public Works.

Attachment/s Yes  No