



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
2nd Floor of City Hall
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov

Legislation Text

File #: ORD. 2023-116, **Version:** 1

To designate the 5300 block of Marian Street in honor of the late Bettie Elizabeth Boyers Cooper. (1st District)

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the late Bettie Elizabeth Boyers Cooper was a New Jersey citizen who grew up in the city of Richmond, graduated from Armstrong High School, was a resident of the Westwood community, and whose employment career included 18 years as a professional seamstress for Jefferson Manufacturing Company and 17 years with the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the most notable accomplishment of Bettie Elizabeth Boyers Cooper, however, was her staunch persistence in pursuing a lawsuit that successfully challenged the racially discriminatory policies of the public school system for the City of Richmond, which mandated that Ms. Cooper's daughter, Daisy Jane, be bused four miles to G. W. Carver Elementary School when the whites-only Westhampton Elementary School was within walking distance of her home; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, Bettie Elizabeth Boyers Cooper was represented by attorneys from the law firm of Hill, Tucker, & Marsh in her case that was ultimately heard by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, which found in 1960 that the racially discriminatory policies complained of were, in fact, unconstitutional and unenforceable; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, in the face of continued resistance, it took another year for the ruling by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit to be implemented in the form of an order from the United States District Court that all Black students in the city of Richmond be allowed to go to previously whites-only schools, thus opening the way for Ms. Cooper's daughter, Daisy Jane, age 12, to be the first Black student to take classes at Westhampton Junior High School; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, Bettie Elizabeth Boyers Cooper also expanded the

educational opportunities for the children of her neighborhood by taking them on field trips using public transportation and not allowing the lack of a personally-owned vehicle be an obstacle; 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 Names.** The 5300 block of Marian Street shall be designated in honor of Bettie Elizabeth Boyers Cooper 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.