

To: City Of Milwaukee
City Hall, Room 205
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

March 19, 2024

Subject: Honorary Street Sign for Mr. James (JL) Davis

I request that an Honorary Street sign be named after Mr. James L Davis for his long dedication to his neighborhood/family, the City of Milwaukee, and his country. The purpose of naming the street is to help recognize a long-time resident who was always willing to help his community, and he took pride in how the neighborhood evolved.

Mr. James Davis, born in Bastrop, Louisiana, on July 5, 1926, to Lelia and Ferdinand Davis, is a man of remarkable achievements. As the eldest of 11 siblings, he shouldered the responsibility of caring for his younger brothers and sisters for many years. Mr. Davis attended Lafayette High School in Camden, Arkansas, and he worked at the International Paper Company until he was drafted into the Army in 1950. He answered his country's call to duty and served during the Korean War as a Combat Infantryman in an Infantry Division, earning the rank of Corporal. His military service, marked by resilience and perseverance, is a testament to his dedication and love for his country.

Shortly after the Korean War, Mr. Davis experienced and witnessed the blatant discrimination and challenges veterans and African Americans faced daily after they served. Nevertheless, he maintained faith in this country during the Civil Rights Movement, riots, and troubling events. He has also experienced the evolution of the internet, cell phones, and the election of the first African American President.

After returning from the Korean War, one of the highlights was meeting his wife and long-time love, MS Emma Jones. They moved to Milwaukee to start their marriage, and they raised one son. They were married for over 60 years, and Mr. Davis's wife and son are now deceased.

Mr. Davis's impact extends beyond his military service. He is a loving husband, father, and neighbor. After moving to Milwaukee, he worked at A. O. Smith for 30 years, saving diligently to purchase his first home. They were the third African American family to move into the neighborhood, and people started referring to the neighborhood as Blackfish Bay as a contradiction to Whitefish Bay. He did not let the negative comments deter him from building a good rapport with the neighbors and assisting them when necessary. He took pride in his house and the neighborhood, often sharing gardening tips with his neighbors. His home was welcoming to family, friends, and neighbors. His dedication to his family and community was evident in his role as a provider, mentor, and kind person.

When Mr. Davis was not doing things in his neighborhood, he enjoyed fishing, hunting, and worshiping at church. He was a long-time member of the Greater Galilee Baptist Church and a regular choir member until the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020. He also volunteered his time to serve meals at the church to homeless and elderly people regularly for decades. He is a quiet,

humble man who is respected by many and has been looked upon as the unofficial leader in our family. Mr. Davis is an outstanding mentor to his family, friends, and neighbors and continues to serve as an excellent brother and uncle. He did not hesitate to mentor children in the neighborhood and at the former Garden Homes Elementary School, where his son attended. The school is now called Lloyd Barbee Montessori School. He enrolled his son in the Boy Scouts and assisted when they went on camping trips. Mr. Davis is 97 years old and is starting to experience some forgetfulness. To this end, I hope our request is approved and mounted in time for his birthday. If approved, we would like it presented on his birthday (July 5th) or earlier. His address is 4421 N. 22nd Street, and the sign should be mounted between Congress and Cornell Streets. Your approval is greatly appreciated, and I can be contacted at 703 328 0589 or clott8407@gmail.com if you have questions.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Gibson Lott