

Robert Johnston

From: Robert Johnston
Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 8:58 AM
To: Jackie Ledbetter
Subject: RE: Street renaming for Emma Jordan

Good morning Jackie:

As the Mayor and I explained when we first discussed this, the City does not have an established procedure for handling requests such as yours. Because of that, we need a copy of the document with the signatures to attach to the agenda which will be posted this Friday afternoon.

Also, did those who signed the document express any preference as to which street could be renamed? Are any of them residents of Van Buren?

Robert

From: Jackie Ledbetter <jackierenea@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 8:31 AM
To: Robert Johnston <Robert.Johnston@clintonok.gov>
Subject: Street renaming for Emma Jordan

Good Morning Mr. Johnston,

It has come to my attention that Van Buren is named for a person and not for the President as I thought. In light of this, I would like to choose another street that is not named for a person to honor Emma Jordan. This has caused some confusion, however, I don't see a problem in moving forward. I have over 100 names of individuals who support the renaming of a street. Please confirm with me that this will be on the agenda for Sept. 19. I will be there with the signatures. Please let me know if there is something more that I should do. Thank you, and looking forward to seeing you on the 19th.

Sincerely,

Jackie Ledbetter

She Protested Injustice by Building Bridges

My name is Jackie Ledbetter, formally Jackie Jordan, and I lived, graduated high school and got married at Bethany Baptist church in Clinton. The following is my account of my mother Emma Lue Frances Jordan, and why I believe she is worthy of being honored for her life's work in Clinton, Oklahoma.

Anyone who knew her can attest to the fact that she was a godly woman. Throughout my entire life I never heard her speak one curse word. She was that consistent in her effort to be like Jesus. The following is my account of my mother's life; a beautiful, brilliant, humble and kind woman. This biography does not account for the countless hours she spent teaching in our little church (Free Church of God in Christ in Jesus Name) and the numerous activities that she, with others, such as Sister Austin and Mother Lister, put together for the children within our little church. Some of my fondest memories are of early morning walks together in the dark from my grandmother's house to join other saints in prayer like Geraldine Carr and others from The Christ Holy Sanctified Church. We were not members there, but we were united in a bond of love as we prayed for our families and for our community.

Emma Lue Frances Jordan was born into a single parent home on May 24, 1935 in Colbert, OK. She was named for her grandmother, great grandmother and great, great grandmother, as family meant everything to her. Her childhood was a difficult one, having an alcoholic mother, living in abject poverty. Having been abandoned by her mother; Frances had to leave school in the sixth grade to care for her grandmother, who was dying of cancer. She recalled many nights when she and her brother went to bed hungry. During the great depression, there were times when all that her grandmother could offer them was sugar water, attempting to calm their aching stomachs. These early adverse childhood experiences imprinted on Emma Lou Frances to be aware of and to empathize with suffering around her, and to always offer relief to those who were vulnerable and at risk. This became the framework from which she would raise a family and infuse a community with acts of love.

As a child I remember my mother taking in various children who were in need of a home, until a home was identified. This was not done through the Department of Human Services; this was simply an out-growth of love in action.

The guiding principle of her life was her love of God. All of Emma Lou's choices went through the lens of pleasing God. What should have devastated her became the foundation upon which her faith emerged. She could be as bold as a lion while remaining as harmless as a dove. She had a quick wit and was never at a loss for a comeback to those nay sayers who were adversaries to the poor. Her wisdom and logic were simple, yet profound. As a visionary, she had the ability to imagine the possibilities of what could be accomplished, having never seen it before. This gifting came from God because she read the bible and knew it to be true. She truly believed that she could do all things through Christ, which strengthened her, and indeed, that is exactly what she did.

Emma Jordan was a trail blazer. She saw the value in making statements by taking action. She was the **first African American in Clinton to run for the city council and then for Mayor**. She was trying to set the stage for a united community where all citizens of Clinton were valued and had a voice. **She was the first parent to insist that Clinton Public Schools follow the federal law and integrate the elementary schools**. She was told that the schools would not provide busing and so she provided transportation herself. Soon, she provided transportation for other black children as well. She created her own initiatives by creating bridges between the black and white communities. She accomplished this by **lobbying white merchants, companies and businesses to hire black youth in public spaces** that had never hired black people before. She brokered a deal to hire the first black grocery sacker at Safeway. My sister Bonnie was the first to break the color line by working at TG&Y. Mr. Stringer was one of the first to open the doors of employment to African American youth at her unctoning. Other companies that she lobbied were Southwestern Bell telephone, the 3M company in Weatherford, and the TB Sanitarium, all of which complied because of her behind-the-scenes lobbying efforts. This also led to the first African American Candy Stripper at the Clinton General Hospital. She protested injustice by building bridges. Her persistence with the U. S. postal service led to them conceding that they would hire someone if she could find someone to pass the exam. And indeed she did just that.

Once the first African American was hired, it opened the doors for others who soon followed. This is not an exhaustive list, for she was always building relationships and leveraging her good name to open doors for others. Without

any self-gain, she worked behind the scenes to engender trust. She was a woman ahead of her time. She never tried to make a name for herself, her motivation was to do God's will in what felt like a community forsaken by the larger community. She wanted our black community to experience equal access to the American dream. This amazing woman felt inferior to no man nor felt superior to anyone, no matter their social or economic station.

Emma Lue always traveled back to her hometown of Colbert regularly, however, she noticed that most of the children in Lincoln addition had no such retreat. In response to this, **she created The Annual Back to School Picnic.** She articulated her plan and got the black and white communities to work together by providing all- you- can- eat hot dogs and Kool aid at Joe Baker Park for all children. She was concerned that they have a positive summer memory where everyone could eat as much as they wanted. She worked with Emily Stratton to create **the first Black Girl Scout troop in Clinton.** Wanting the community to take pride in their community, she organized a **community-wide yard cleaning event.** In the spirit of unity, on a particular Saturday. everyone who participated would clean their yards and chop weeds that were not attended by the city. When Mrs. Taylor decided to retire and move, Mrs. Taylor called Mrs. Jordan to see if she would purchase her property. Emma saw an opportunity to develop something for the community. With her personal funds, she purchased the property to use as a community center and this is the same property which, after her death, was procured for what is now The Eastside Academy. From this purchase **Emma developed her community organization; Concerned Black Parents.**

Through CBP many services were offered to the community. These various services were tailored for seniors, youth and all ages in between. Among these services was a food coop. Although Sylvester and Emma Jordan had managed to put together standard housing for themselves, her empathy was to those who had not been as fortunate. She knew that her spirit would not rest until she had achieved affordable housing for others. With the assistance of Jim Robins and Roy Brooks, her last gift to her community was to go to Washington, D.C. where she was subjected to intense questioning by a congressional committee as to why the government should help humble black people in Clinton, OK with housing. She said the experience was emotionally draining, however, in the end **she was awarded a grant to build a total of 47 brick homes in Clinton with the majority**

being in Lincoln addition. Building these homes for those who otherwise would not have been able to live in standard homes was her greatest achievement and the crowning glory of her life's work. This was unprecedented. Shortly after this achievement, she succumbed to cancer at age 47. Her life's work was to level the playing field for others and some loved her for it and others begrudged her for it, but either way, she did it because of her love for God and her love for her community.

YES, I am in agreement with the re-naming of [REDACTED] to Emma Jordan Drive to recognize and honor Emma Lue Frances Jordan. Her life's work culminated in building 45 brick homes within the community of Clinton. The inspiration to build these affordable homes came from a great love of her community in believing that God wanted her to build standard housing for all citizens of Clinton, regardless of their financial ability. *Sister Jordan* (as many called her) was a principled woman of faith with the conviction that love is shown through action.

Thank you for your consent to honor this humble woman, whose singular goal was to serve God by serving others.

SIGNATURES

- 1) [Signature]
- 2) [Signature]
- 3) [Signature]
- 4) Ariel Besson
- 5) Louie Moore
- 6) Susanna Williams
- 7) [Signature]
- 8) [Signature]
- 9) Dickie Kirkendall
- 10) Jessie Kirkendall

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SIGNATURES

- 1) Margaret Jessup
- 2) Gussie Marie Ross
- 3) Dorothy Jordan
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

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SIGNATURES

- 1) CHARLES Mc BRAYER
- 2) *Glenn Spruitt*
- 3) Amy Ford
- 4) John Abbas
- 5) Ronald L. RedShin
- 6) Tisheena Cowbey
- 7) _____
- 8) Cristy Washburn
- 9) *Terry Reynolds*
- 10) *Adm Wood*

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SIGNATURES

1) Earl High

2) Beck High

3) ~~AAAA~~

4) Alice Jordan

5) [Signature]

6) [Signature]

7) Hwendolyn Brown

8) [Signature]

9) Wright, Grace / City of Dowell

10) Linda Sparks

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SIGNATURES

- 1) D. D. Miles Jr.
- 2) Kenneth Washburn
- 3) Jeffrey West
- 4) [Signature]
- 5) Evelyn Abram
- 6) ESCOE ABRAM
- 7) Pamela Ford
- 8) Jarom Davidson
- 9) Addison Aaron Cade
- 10) [Signature]

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SIGNATURES

- 1) Christy Dampier
- 2) Keen Perkins
- 3) Ann Malone
- 4) Victoria Rendell
- 5) Sharon Carter
- 6) John Ayers
- 7) Beulah Ross
- 8) Terry Jackson
- 9) Jennie Walter
- 10) Jesus Hopewell

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SIGNATURES

- 1) *Orinth Hester*
- 2) *Ashley Hester*
- 3) *Roderick Barker*
- 4) *Janice*
- 5) *[Signature]*
- 6) *Michael Ford*
- 7) *William H. Vanhook*
- 8) *Francis Williams*
- 9) *Velma Miles*
- 10) *Carey Thornton II*

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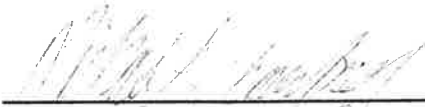
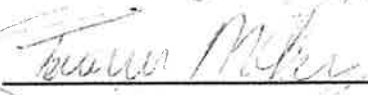

SIGNATURES

- 1) Therice Dickson
- 2) Nyonna Williams
- 3) Lonnie & Lister
- 4) Yvonne Lister
- 5) Savonne Laska
- 6) Donja Young
- 7) Keniece Williams
- 8) Johnny Brock
- 9) Martha Robinson
- 10) Sheena Miles

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SIGNATURES

- 1)  _____
- 2)  _____
- 3)  _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

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SIGNATURES

- 1) *Amie (Charlett) Collins*
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

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SIGNATURES

- 1) Sheila McBrayer
- 2) Jewel McBrayer
- 3) Gary Adair
- 4) Preston McBrayer
- 5) Sherry Adair
- 6) Jimmy McBrayer
- 7) Shanie McBrayer
- 8) Cherrill McBrayer
- 9) Adriana Ford
- 10) Joe Banks

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SIGNATURES

- 1) Pat Carter
- 2) A.J. Nelson
- 3) Avahe Washington
- 4) Net Thompson
- 5) Lovey Booker
- 6) Donna McBrayer
- 7) Monica Chapman
- 8) Sally Booze
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

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SIGNATURES

- 1) Birdy of Ronick Clinton
- 2) Mozelle Williams Richardson Clinton
- 3) Jay Ronick Clinton
- 4) Kathy Ramirez Clinton
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

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SIGNATURES.

- 1) Robert A. Moore Clinton
- 2) Calvin Neal Clinton
- 3) Ray Neal Clinton
- 4) Wilma Jean Clinton
- 5) Leonard Jackson Clinton
- 6) Leola Jackson Clinton
- 7) William Moore Clinton
- 8) Therma L. Hankins Clinton
- 9) Ray Bess Clinton
- 10) Jeff Waff Clinton

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SIGNATURES

- 1) Samantha Mabae
- 2) Cecald Trotter
- 3) Terrance Malone
- 4) Alisha Hunt
- 5) Royt Hunt
- 6) Lani Baker
- 7) Eddie Murray
- 8) Janette Daghe
- 9) Melissa Chapman
- 10) Terence McBrayer