

RENAME PORTLAND BLVD as ROSA PARKS WAYIF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, **PRINT** YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

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Vancouver Avenue 1st Baptist Church

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The Rev. J.W. Matt Hennessee, Senior Pastor

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*Mr. Sandy Harris, Chair
Board of Deacons*

*Mr. A.W. Williams, Chair
Board of Trustees*

**Letter of Support for Street Name Change from
N.E. Portland Blvd. to N.E. Rosa Parks Way:**

**Presented by Pastor J.W. Matt Hennessee,
Senior Pastor of Vancouver Ave. 1st Baptist Church**

Wednesday, October 18, 2006

Copies to:

The Honorable Tom Potter ✓
Mayor, City of Portland
Portland City Hall
1221 S.W. Fifth St.,
Portland, OR 97204

The Honorable Dan Saltzman
City Commissioner
Portland City Hall
1221 S.W. Fifth St.,
Portland, OR 97204

The Honorable Erik Sten
City Commissioner
Portland City Hall
1221 S.W. Fifth St.,
Portland, OR 97204

The Honorable Sam Adams
City Commissioner
Portland City Hall
1221 S.W. Fifth St.,
Portland, OR 97204

The Honorable Randy Leonard
City Commissioner
Portland City Hall
1221 S.W. Fifth St.,
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*Mr. Sandy Harris, Chair
Board of Deacons*

*Mr. A.W. Williams, Chair
Board of Trustees*

October 18, 2006

The Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners
City of Portland, Portland City Hall
1221 S.W. Fourth St.,
Portland, OR 97211

Re: Letter of support for street name change
from N.E. Portland Blvd. to N.E. Rosa Parks Way

Dear Mayor Potter and Members of the Portland City Commission:

As each of you know, I love this City. I love its heritage, the many courageous people who have made it great, and those of us who work relentlessly every day; some known and most unknown; to make a brighter future for our children and the generations to come.

I count it a humbling moment, privilege, blessing, and high honor to join Superintendent Johnson, Drs. Bethel, Hardy, Haynes and other community leaders this morning in supporting the legislation to re-name N.E. Portland Blvd. to N.E. Rosa Parks Way.

The late Mrs. Rosa Parks was a great woman in her own right and proved to all of us here at home and abroad, that a single human being can make a difference and in Rosa Park's case, a monumental difference. She wasn't seeking international fame and notoriety after leaving work as a seamstress at the Montgomery Fair Store on Thursday, December 1, 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama. She only sought to find a seat on a crowded bus and rest her aching feet.

However, due to her refusal to give up her seat, defying the laws of segregation in Montgomery, Mrs. Parks was jailed. Her refusal didn't just ignite concern about the system of segregation in public transportation, she sparked a movement whose impact, led by the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is still practiced today as people world-wide use Kingian non-violent principles of protest. The purpose of these principles is to create a vehicle for common ground and reconciliation so that people of good will, engaged in a conflict, may find a mutually agreeable resolution and manage their differences peacefully.

I had the blessing and honor to spend time with Mrs. Parks on a number of occasions and found her to be a tremendously humble and self-effacing woman. She often deflected any recognition of her courageous stance and the movement she sparked that led to a change in

the local laws governing bus rides in Montgomery. Anyone who met Mrs. Parks came away awed by her presence, her contribution to American History, and her tremendous gift of engaging anyone she met.

I'd like to add my voice and that of the members of Vancouver Ave. 1st Baptist Church to the chorus of people already supporting this street name change. I believe this would be a fitting and stellar honor and tribute to a woman whose actions helped America and the world step up to a higher plane and celebrate the dignity of all human beings. It is my hope, even if there is some opposition, that you will stand strong, unflappable, and undeterred in making this change for the good of the entire community and provide an opportunity to say, "thank you", to a woman who's quiet, but measured decision helped America become a better America.

I'm thankful for what she did and respect the fact that people of all races got together to fight for the rights of all. I'm thrilled that over 50 years later we're still doing it—fighting together for the rights of all. That is what makes us great—working together, praying together, protesting together, determined to make sure what we do strengthens the foundation of our magnificent country and the fabric of our public discourse.

My personal prayer, Mr. Mayor and Members of the City Commission, is that the great City of Roses will continue to make strides, large and small, to ensure all of its citizens the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I also hope we will do it in the same glorious spirit of a bus boycotting 70+ year old grandmother in Montgomery whose name doesn't appear in the annals of American History, but her words do. She was walking to work one morning during the boycott and was offered more than one ride, but she refused each one of them. When asked why she did she said simply, "...my feet is tired, but my soul is at rest..." I marvel at the great work each of you do each day for our great City. I'm also confident that every now and then your "feet" may get tired, but I pray that your "souls" too, are at rest.

Thank you again for the chance to share my thoughts with you and I ask that this message be a part of the official record of these proceedings. God be with you and may our brightest days always lie ahead.

Most sincerely,



J.W. Matt Hennessee,
Senior Pastor

Attachments