

Application for New Park Naming

Proposed Name for the Park: The Britton, Durst, Howard, & Spence Building at 1183 Chestnut

The BDHS Building

If proposing the name of an individual, include a biographical description of nominee:

Lawrence M. Britton Sr.

Lawrence Britton Sr. was in the education profession for over 31 years, with 29 years in AISD as a teacher and coach. He started his coaching career at the old LC Anderson HS which prior to integration was the only all-African-American secondary school in east Austin. He was an assistant coach in football, head coach in track & field, and head basketball coach. While working as assistant coach, Anderson HS was a football power second to none in the old Negro Interscholastic League, which was operated by Prairie View A&M. In the 27 years the league operated, Anderson won four outright State Championships; the only school to do so. In 1964 old Anderson HS entered the UIL, and as head football coach, Mr. Britton's team won back-to-back district championships in 1968 and 1969, and one Bi-District Championship that advanced to Regional play in 1969. Mr. Britton also coached and taught at McCallum HS and Reagan HS.

Mr. Britton was a strong advocate for programs and services for East Austin youth. After retiring from AISD, he continued his work with youth as one of the founding *organizers of the East Austin Youth Foundation* in 1972. He served in the organization for over 15 years. He also served as a board member, July 1978-June 1991, on City of Austin Parks and Recreation Parks Board. His honors including induction into the Prairie View Hall of Honor, induction into the Austin Sports Hall of Honor, recognition by the Legislative Black Caucus of the State of Texas for Outstanding Contribution in Athletics, and for service level commitment to Black Texans and the State of Texas. To many he was known as a role model on whom futures were built. Mr. Britton died May 6, 2002 in Austin at the age of 82.

Rev. Albert Lavada Durst

Rev. Albert Lavada Durst was born in 1913 in Austin, Texas. In the 1940's he was the announcer for the Austin Senators, an African-American League Professional Baseball Team. John Connelly, who was at that time an owner of KVET Radio, heard the "Hep Talk" of the young announcer and hired him as a disc jockey, making him one of the first African American deejays in America. Using the name "Dr. Hep Cat", on his radio program entitled The Rosewood Ramble; he brought national recognition to the dialect he

used. He published a book on "Hep Talk" with a glossary of terms. In 1978, the Warner Brothers trade magazine "Wax" gave Durst credit for being among the inventors of rock 'n' roll radio.

Rev. Durst is a former barrelhouse pianist and singer and has performed at numerous blues and folk festivals both alone and alongside his longtime friend, Robert Shaw. He recorded albums for the Uptown and Peacock labels, which were distributed regionally. He also brought many major African-American entertainers to *Doris Miller Auditorium* where he worked as Athletic Director. Among those musical guests were Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, Ella Fitzgerald, and Sam Cooke. When he retired from the Parks Department in 1979, State Representative Wilhelmina Delco and the City of Austin recognized Durst for his distinguished work with the city's youth. Rev. Durst died October 31, 1995 in Austin at the age of 82.

James Howard

James Howard was one of the founding *members of the East Austin Youth Foundation* established 1972. He served as the organization's first president. Under his leadership, the East Austin Youth Foundation sponsored Pop Warner Football for ages 8-13; cheerleading, colt / pony league baseball, and youth basketball.

In 1975 Mr. Howard left the East Austin Youth Foundation and established **the Greater East Austin Youth Association (GEAYA)**. GEAYA is a volunteer organization that strives to provide quality, organized and structured sports activities for the economically disadvantaged youth of East Austin. The principle for these efforts, in addition to providing a safe and fun environment for competitive participation, is to instill and reinforce a strong sense of values in the youth served. Mr. Howard, currently, coaches and is very active in fundraising for GEAYA. The association sponsors youth football, cheerleading, and little league baseball. Mr Howard currently presides as the president of the Greater East Austin Youth Association.

Donald Joseph Spence

A proud graduate of old Anderson High School, Donald Spence received his Bachelor's degree from Huston Tillotson College. He taught several years in the Elgin Independent School District. He later moved to Oakland, California where he was the Director of the Oakland Boys Club.

In 1976 he was employed by the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department where he held numerous positions including Assistant Supervisor at the Rosewood Recreation Center, the first supervisor of the Givens Recreation Center, and the East Area Program Manager. He was a strong advocate for youth sports and worked through his various positions to improve youth sports in the East Austin Community. He retired from the city in 1992.

After retiring, Donald became the commissioner for the Greater East Austin Youth Association (GEAYA), which he held for ten years. During his tenure, he assumed the responsibility for reestablishing the Historical Juneteenth Celebration at Rosewood Park.

He worked to obtain a strong collaboration between the City of Austin and GEAYA as host of the Juneteenth Celebration. Today, the Juneteenth Celebration is a major annual fundraiser for the organization. Donald also worked with the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department to obtain Capital Improvement Funds to upgrade the Mabson Youth Baseball Field. Upgrades included a concession stand, restrooms, equipment storage, and ball field improvements. Mr. Spence died in Austin February 4, 2005 at the age of 73.

Describe the individual's involvement in the Austin community:

James Howard was one of the founding *members of the East Austin Youth Foundation* established 1972. He served as the organization's first president. Under his leadership, the East Austin Youth Foundation sponsored Pop Warner Football for ages 8-13; cheerleading, colt / pony league baseball, and youth basketball. James Howard was inducted into the

Describe the individual's connection to the park or park system, if any:

Donald Spence, In 1976 he was employed by the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department where he held numerous positions including Assistant Supervisor at the Rosewood Recreation Center, the first supervisor of the Givens Recreation Center.

Lavada Durst, When he retired from the Parks Department in 1979, State Representative Wilhelmina Delco and the City of Austin recognized Durst for his distinguished work with the city's youth. Rev. Durst died October 31, 1995 in Austin at the age of 82. He also served as a board member, July 1978-June 1991, on City of Austin Parks and Recreation Parks Board.

Date: 08/16/2010

Name of requester: Kenneth D. Thompson Sr.

Address: 1117 Haverford Drive Austin, Texas 78753

Phone Number: 512.633.8722

Please provide any additional information with the application, e.g., newspaper articles, letter of recommendations, etc.

Direct questions to:

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