

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Chatham- Savannah Historic Sites and Monuments Commission  
**FROM:** Joe Shearouse Jr.  
**DATE:** August 17, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** **Unnamed City Facility- Floyd Adams Jr. City Services Complex**

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**Proposed Name:** Floyd Adams Jr. City Services Complex  
**Location:** 14 Interchange Court, Savannah Georgia  
**Petitioner:** Mayor Van Johnson, City of Savannah  
**Staff contact:** Joe Shearouse, [jshearouse01@savannahga.gov](mailto:jshearouse01@savannahga.gov), (912) 429-4084

Requirements for naming newly created, acquired, or unnamed property. (Sec.4-1102)

Criteria Requirement met by request

- ✓ To honor and commemorate noteworthy persons
- ✓ To strengthen neighborhood identity

Restrictions

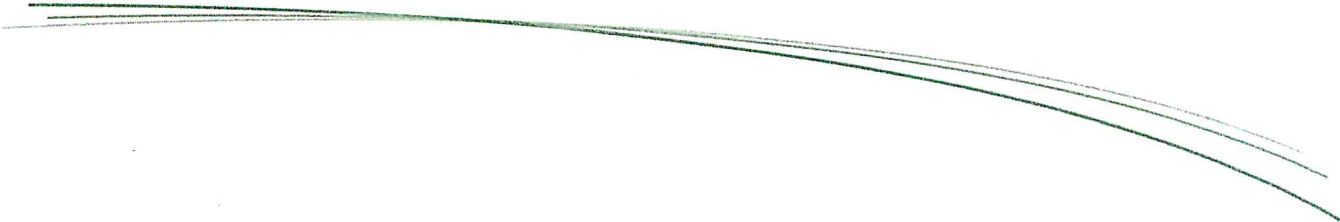
- ✓ Person must reside within the City of Savannah for minimum of 5 years
- ✓ Names assigned to existing public property within the City or unincorporated Chatham County where duplication of the name is likely to lead to confusion; and
- ✓ Except as set forth in Section 4-1106, commercial names where usage of such name would amount to advertising.

Considerations

- ✓ The number of residents and businesses directly affected;
- ✓ Community diversity;
- ✓ The historical significance of preexisting name or location;
- ✓ The appropriateness and compatibility of the request in relation to the existing area;
- ✓ The impact on emergency service delivery; and
- ✓ Continuity and stability.

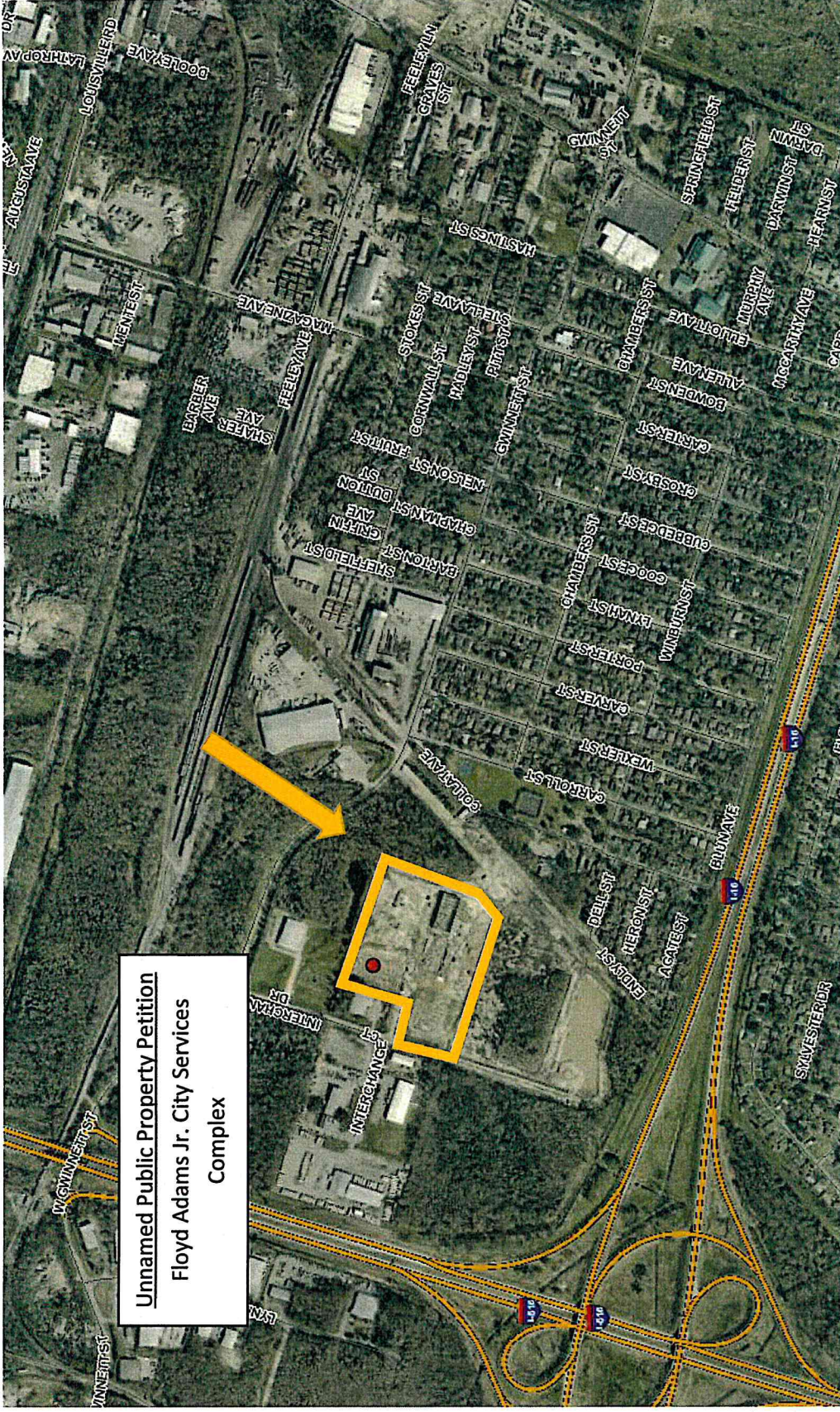
Natural Person Naming Request

- ✓ Proposed honoree for permanent naming should be deceased

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- ✓ Honoree should have demonstrated a sustained contribution over a period including but not limited to leadership, community development, cultural or historical affairs, humanitarian efforts or governmental service.

Attachments

1. Petition request
  - a. Official request and support evidence of naming request
  - b. City Council Endorsement
  - c. Map of location
2. City Staff comments on request



**Unnamed Public Property Petition**  
**Floyd Adams Jr. City Services**  
**Complex**

**Petition Summary**

**Petition Request:** Unnamed Public Property  
**Proposed Name:** Floyd Adams Jr. City Services Complex  
**Location:** 14 Interchange Court  
**Petitioner:** Mayor Floyd Adams



Opinion

## Floyd Adams Jr.: The people's mayor

Posted Feb 3, 2014 at 10:04 PM

*"First and foremost, we are all Savannahians. My race, or gender for that matter, has no bearing on how well I can lead Savannah."*

- Savannah Mayor Floyd Adams Jr. in his first inaugural speech, January 1996.

FORMER SAVANNAH Mayor Floyd Adams Jr. didn't relish the limelight during his eight years as the city's top elected leader. It's something that came with the territory.

Instead, this working man's son had a higher purpose - to serve every person in his hometown, unpretentiously and equitably, without fear or favor.

Mr. Adams died Saturday at Candler Hospital at the age of 68. His death was unexpected. It's a sad blow to this community, where he will go down in the history books as Savannah's first African-American mayor.

This trail-blazing title was something that Mr. Adams, who tended to be soft-spoken, neither sought nor bragged about. Instead, he promised to represent all Savannahians. He wanted to be judged by his deeds. Let historians determine how well he did.

He should expect a favorable report card.

Mr. Adams can rightly claim credit for many accomplishments during his two terms, which stretched from 1996 through 2003. He was a bricks-and-mortar kind of mayor. He focused on neighborhood improvements and infrastructure, especially in areas suffering from blight and neglect.

The positive changes in historic Cuyler/Brownville west of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard bear his signature. So are improvements on the eastside of town. There, he helped secure funds to rebuild affordable housing on the site of the decrepit Garden Homes project. He got the city to upgrade the nearby Benjamin Van Clark Park neighborhood as well.

One of his predecessors in the mayor's office, John P. Rousakis, was the road guy who saw that the city's dirt streets were paved. Mr. Adams was the drainage guy. He and others on City Council (no mayor, because of the city's council-manager form of government, does this work alone) committed millions of dollars in supplemental sales tax revenue to reduce or eliminate flooding.

On major policy matters, he supported the merger of the city and county police departments. He rightly saw it as step toward streamlining governments and improving quality. Today, given 20-20 hindsight, there are things both governments would do differently about police. But credit Mr. Adams for trying to get citizens to think regionally, as opposed to focusing only on their own backyards.

On economic matters, Mr. Adams was rightly pro-business. Paychecks contribute to this city's strength and vitality. They help solve social problems and erase poverty.

He also understood that property taxes and crime were causing some city residents to flee to the suburbs, leaving Savannah with a shrinking middle class and potentially turning some southside areas into "ghettos."

He doubtlessly learned these life lessons as a working man himself. He was the publisher of his family-owned Savannah Herald newspaper, founded by his father, Floyd "Pressboy" Adams. He understood and embraced how business and the work ethic worked.

Some critics bellyached that the mayor of a city with a new black-majority population and black-majority on City Council was too cozy with the mostly white business community. But they failed to understand politics and pragmatism, and how much of this area's success depended on people of all races and backgrounds getting along.

They also failed to understand that no one loved Savannah as much as Floyd Adams.

A defining moment occurred early in his first term in April 1996, just four months after he was sworn in. Mr. Adams represented the city in the Confederate Memorial Day ceremony in Forsyth Park. He was the only African American in a crowd that included some participants in Confederate gray. Many ripped him that day. But the mayor characteristically shrugged them off. It wasn't a case of supporting the old South. He was being a man of his word.

Mr. Adams was just like most Savannahians born and raised here - fiercely independent and beholden to no one. He was a registered Democrat. Yet in 2004, he turned heads by supporting Republican Frank Murray for county commission chairman over Democrat Pete Liakakis, who would win.

Mr. Adams was the first mayor to be limited to two terms in office because of state legislation. But his desire to serve still burned. He ran several ill-fated races before winning a district seat on the school board. He sought the mayor's seat again in 2011, promising to restore harmony to a dysfunctional City Council. Many voters agreed with his sentiments. But the majority thought Edna Jackson, who went on to win, was the better messenger.

The public extends its thoughts, prayers and gratitude to Mr. Adams' family.

"Racial harmony is going to be the success of this region," Mr. Adams told this newspaper in 2003. He's right. He did his part to bring people together. He was the people's mayor. That's how he should be remembered.



## Community mourns death of former Mayor Floyd Adams

By Eric Curl

Posted Feb 2, 2014 at 12:26 AM

Community leaders and friends reflected upon the legacy of former Mayor Floyd Adams Jr. this weekend, upon news of his death at the age of 68.

Candler Hospital spokesman Scott Larson reported that Adams had died Saturday at the hospital.

A husband and father of two adult children, Adams was the city's first black mayor, serving two terms from 1996 through 2003.

Despite breaking racial ground, the description always made Adams chuckle, said longtime friend state Rep. Mickey Stephens, D-Savannah.

"He'd say he was everybody's mayor - not the first black mayor," Stephens said. "He was Savannah's mayor."

Still, the achievement was significant to people who participated in the civil rights movement, as well as younger people who were inspired to enter public service, said Alderman Van Johnson, who now serves the First District that Adams once represented in Savannah's City Council.

Johnson said that Adams was a trailblazer and an inspiration who proved Savannahians could be judged by the content of their character, rather than the color of their skin.

Adams never stopped speaking out for the impoverished and others who he felt were not being adequately served, Johnson said.

"He had tenacity for fighting for those who could not fight for themselves," he said.

Alderman Tony Thomas, who had served on the council during Floyd's last term as mayor, said he was devastated by the news Saturday.

"We were good friends," Thomas said.

Prior to serving as mayor, Adams became First District alderman in 1982 and went on to serve two terms. He was then elected as alderman at-large.

The mayoral job followed, with Adams serving two terms. He faced no re-election opposition.

In 2002, while serving as mayor, Adams announced a bid for the 12th District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He changed his mind in June, partially because of his mother's poor health. His mother, Wilhelmina A. Adams, died in October 2003.

In 2006, he unsuccessfully ran for Savannah-Chatham school board president. The following year, he entered the mayoral race at the last minute, only to lose to incumbent Mayor Otis Johnson.

In 2008, Adams asked the school board to appoint him to fill the unexpired term of a member who had resigned. The board instead chose Daniel Frazier. In a November special election, Adams defeated Frazier to win the District 2 seat.

School board president Joe Buck said that Adams became a good friend when they were running against one another. Later, while he served on the school board with him, Adams worked to ensure the needs of the children and teachers were being met, Buck said.

Adams stepped down from his second term with the school board in 2011, to again run for mayor. Mayor Edna Jackson ended up winning the race.

Adams was also a publisher of the Savannah Herald newspaper.

Jackson said she was deeply saddened and offered her condolences to Adams' family, while stating that his death was a loss for the entire city. In addition to encouraging her own mayoral run, Adams left behind a strong legacy by unifying the city when he ignored racial and economic barriers to become mayor of all of Savannah, Jackson said. She said Adams' name cannot be mentioned without thinking of the work he did to strengthen neighborhoods, improve city infrastructure and grow Savannah's economy.

"His legacy will always be remembered," she said.

2. Each member of this body does hereby confirms that to the best of his or her knowledge, the subject matter of the closed session was devoted to matters within the specific relevant exception(s) as set forth above;
3. The presiding officer is hereby authorized and directed to execute an affidavit, with full support of the Council in order to comply with O.C.G.A. §50-14-4(b); 17
4. The affidavit shall be included and filed with the official minutes of the meeting and shall be in a form as required by the statute.

**ADOPTED AND APPROVED FEBRUARY 6, 2014** upon motion of Alderman Johnson seconded by Alderman Thomas and unanimously carried.

Mayor Jackson read the resolution said she extended an invitation to those who served or worked with Mayor Adams to travel and sit with them at the funeral which is Friday, February 7, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. at St. James Catholic Church. Alderman Shabazz said when Mayor Adams passed, she quoted this to many people and she wants to mention it. In the book of Revelations Chapter 2, verse 10 stated that if you remain faithful even facing death I will give you the crown of life. She can say that in knowing him she can say he worked even until death. Mayor Jackson said she went over to check on the Men's Breakfast Club that meets at Larry's and they had his chair draped and her heart goes out to them also on this loss.

**A RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FLOYD ADAMS, JR., THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN MAYOR OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH FROM 1996 TO 2003 WHO DIED ON FEBRUARY 1, 2014.**

**WHEREAS:** Floyd Adams, Jr. was born on May 11, 1945, in Savannah, Georgia to the late Floyd "Pressboy" and Wilhelmina Adams; and

**WHEREAS:** Floyd Adams attended St. Pius X Catholic High School and Armstrong State College, going on to serve as the publisher, general manager and editor of the Savannah Herald, Savannah's Black weekly newspaper and printing company started by his parents in 1945; and

**WHEREAS:** Floyd Adams was elected as District One City of Savannah Alderman in 1982 and served in that post until he was elected Alderman-At-Large Post One in 1992, serving as Mayor Pro Tempore from 1992 until 1995; and

**WHEREAS:** Floyd Adams made history by being elected the first African American and sixty-third Mayor of the City of Savannah in 1995. Being unopposed and reelected in 1999, allowed him to serve two consecutive four-year terms. He was elected to the Savannah Chatham County School Board in 2003; stepping down from his second term in 2011; and

**WHEREAS:** While serving as Mayor, some of his biggest accomplishments were in housing redevelopment, poverty reduction and the distribution of SPLOST funds for infrastructure and improvements to our drainage system. During his first term, Savannah hosted the 1996 Olympic Yachting event; and

**WHEREAS:** Mayor Adams helped launch the most aggressive drainage improvement program in Savannah's history, overseeing more than \$100 million in projects during his tenure. Annexations under his watch on the Westside and Southside increased Savannah's land area by 40% and greatly broadened the community's tax base. An expansion of Savannah's water and sewer infrastructure allowed new residential and industrial growth. Savannah experienced the greatest period of economic expansion in the past half century and the birth of the modern tourism industry. He oversaw the redevelopment of traditionally underserved neighborhoods, such as Cuyler-Brownsville, the transformation of the Garden Homes Community to Ashley Midtown, Benjamin Van Clark, and Feiler Park; and

**WHEREAS:** Mayor Adams was involved in a variety of local, state and national organizations including United Way, Private Industry Council, Georgia Black Elected Officials Association, National Black Council of Local Elected Officials and the National League of Cities. He served as President of the Georgia Municipal Association. He was a member of the Savannah Branch of the NAACP, Cloverdale and Cuyler Neighborhood Associations, Benedict Social Club and President of the Parish Council of St. Anthony Catholic Church; receiving various awards and honors during his political life; and

**WHEREAS:** Mayor Floyd Adams, Jr. passed at Candler Hospital on February 1, 2014, at the age of 68 leaving his wife, Deborah, a son Kenneth (Kimetra) Adams, a daughter Khristi (Eltoria) Chisholm, five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and a host of family members and friends.

**NOW, THEREFORE,** be it resolved that The Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah on behalf of its citizens, join those who mourn the loss of Mayor Floyd Adams, Jr. who proclaimed in his inaugural address that "My race, or gender for that matter, has no bearing on how well I can lead Savannah." **Floyd Adams, "A Mayor For All People"**

**WE FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGE** his many contributions to Savannah as a trailblazer leaving an outstanding and historic legacy as a public servant by making this resolution a part of the permanent record of the City of Savannah Council meeting of February 6, 2014 and presenting a copy to his family.

**ADOPTED AND APPROVED FEBRUARY 6, 2014** upon motion of Alderman Osborne seconded by Alderman Thomas and unanimously carried.

Marty Johnston outlined the resolution and events for St. Patrick's Day Festival tDays. We are waiting to hear from the state legislators on a bill which allows Sunday sales before St. Patrick's Days. Alderman Thomas clarified that the City Manager was being authorized to amend the resolution, should this bill clear the Georgia Senate.

**A RESOLUTION TO DESIGNATE MARCH 14<sup>th</sup> THROUGH MARCH 17<sup>th</sup> AS THE FESTIVAL DAYS FOR THE ST. PATRICK'S DAY FESTIVAL 2014; AND TO DESIGNATE THE AREA BOUNDED BY EAST BROAD STREET ON THE EAST, THE SAVANNAH RIVER ON THE NORTH, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BOULEVARD ON THE WEST, AND BROUGHTON LANE FROM MARTIN LUTHER**