

Meltons

I'm so proud of you!  
You got a few amens

REMARK In Favor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard at Johnson Ave

Good Evening, ~~Gentle persons of the~~ <sup>Mayor Perrin, Members of</sup> Jonesboro City Council, ~~Ms. Jackson & Ms. Duane~~

~~My name is Lisa Melton Jackson.~~ <sup>Melton</sup> I grew up here as Lisa Hunter having moved to Jonesboro when I was three. I attended Jonesboro Public Schools, graduated from Jonesboro High and Arkansas State University. My mother, Dr. Frances Downing Hunter from Hoxie, taught at ASU and was my first teacher about the intrinsic dignity of every person, that education is the great equalizer, and <sup>with</sup> all deserve the opportunity to live as Dr. King dreamed. My great uncle, Leslie Howell, along with Councilman Vance's father, Howard Vance, sat on the Hoxie School Board when they voted UNANIMOUSLY to do the thing that was "right in the site of God" and desegregate the Hoxie Public Schools. I am deeply proud of that legacy.

And, it is humbly in that tradition that I ~~strongly~~ urge all members of the Jonesboro City Council to vote in favor of the resolution renaming Johnson Avenue after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. King, to this very moment, calls us to "the better angels of our nature". His speeches ring in the ears of school children the world over and his teachings of nonviolent resistance to inequality inform and inspire us still today as, at times, it seems we are taking steps backward. He has a federal holiday named in his honor signed into law by <sup>President</sup> Ronald Reagan.

**HERO**  
He is an American ~~hero~~, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, who gave his life for a dream. A dream that ALL in the land of the free and the home of the brave will have an equal shot at the American dream.

*The same dream that motivates men & women to fight for our Country.*

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Let me be clear, this is not an issue that affects only one segment of our community. In Dr. King's words, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." To paraphrase Dr. King, we are damned without **equal** rights and **equal** opportunities. Dr. King stood for equality for ALL people the world over.

The city of Jonesboro can send a powerful message **the world over** that we hold dear the same value in the equality of every person, and that if you come to this city, you will find a place where you, through your hard work and dedication, will "**not be judged by the color of your skin but by the content of your character.**"

Businesses seeking a place to build and sell their products or students hoping to build their futures will view this unifying thoroughfare as an open gate welcoming them to our great city and university.

While Johnson Avenue's namesake is a valued part of the history of downtown Jonesboro, unfortunately, the street has served as the great divide between Jonesboro's black and white citizens making it the absolute right road to be renamed in Dr. King's honor.

I believe if Mr. Johnson ~~was~~ the man he is purported to have been, he, too, would believe this is the right thing at the right time for Jonesboro.

REMARKS

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I know this body prays when opening the council meeting and I ~~assume~~<sup>know</sup> you are people of faith.

Quoting the first book of Kings, Chapter 3 verses 11 and 12

"Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked

riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself

understanding to discern justice, **12** behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have

given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you,

nor shall any like you arise after you.

**It is you, it is this council, it is time. . .**

In the words of my dear and respected friend, Emma Agnew, it is time to "bridge the divide and bring us together".

Please call on the better angels of your nature, and vote in favor of the resolution honoring Dr.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thank you!