

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY


CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. _____ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER CARROLL FIFE

RESOLUTION COMMEMORATIVELY RENAMING THE 1700 BLOCK OF MARITIME STREET AS 'SERGEANT MORRIE TURNER WAY'; THE 2100 BLOCK OF MARITIME STREET AS 'MAJOR HOWARD JACKSON WAY'; AND THE 000 BLOCK OF BURMA ROAD AS 'MAJOR GENERAL JOHN STANFORD WAY', PURSUANT TO LOCAL PRECEDENT AND THE POLICY AND CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY RESOLUTION NO. 77967 C.M.S.

WHEREAS, California Government Code Section 34091.1 allows a jurisdiction by resolution to name a new public street or to rename an existing public street; and

WHEREAS, the naming of a new public street or the renaming of an existing public street is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970; and

WHEREAS, the City Council will occasionally honor the contributions of an outstanding individual with commemorative street names or by the renaming of a public street such as with Joe Morgan Way, Herbert Guice Way, Peter Van Kleeff Way, Dr. Huey P. Newton Way, Deontae Bush Way, Dorothy King Way, Too Short Way, and Tupac Shakur Way; and

WHEREAS, the City Council in 2003 established procedures for commemorative street naming through Resolution No. 77967 C.M.S. under which the City Council may, by its own motion, consider the renaming of a public street as a tribute to an individual, or as a result of a significant event or activity if one of the following conditions is met:

The individual has positively impacted the lives of a nation or the world; or
The name change is related to an economic development or redevelopment activity; or
The renaming commemorates a significant historical event; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may commemorate a nominee either by: a) retaining the existing street name and installing commemorative plaques or signs; or 2) renaming the existing street for the individual and installing new street signs; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that Major General John Stanford, Major Howard Jackson, and Sergeant Morrie Turner, all provided significant contributions to the Oakland community and our nation that eminently merits commemoration.

- 1) Born in Oakland in 1923, the late Sergeant Morris “Morrie” Turner, attended Cole Elementary and McClymonds High School. As a service member, he was the first Black cartoonist to work with Stars and Stripes. He also served as a mechanic for the legendary all Black air squadron the Tuskegee Airmen. With a need to shore up the Armed Forces during World War II the President of the United States at the time determined that Black men could serve in the military but that they would remain segregated and that the military would determine the proportion of Blacks allowed into the service.

Ultimately 1.2 million Black Americans served in World War II. Most were assigned to non-combat units and relegated to service duties. However, as casualties mounted among white soldiers toward the final year of the war, the military had to utilize Black Americans in front line positions to win the war. As a mechanic for the Tuskegee Airmen, Sergeant Morrie Turner was one of the few Black service members who directly supported an all Black fighter pilot squadron, that was responsible for completing 1600 combat missions and the destruction of 237 Nazi-German aircraft on the ground and 37 in the air.

After the war, Turner worked for the Oakland Police Department where he created the comic strip *Baker’s Helper*. After openly questioning why there were no minorities in cartoons to a white cartoonist he decided to create his own that had an all Black cast titled: *Dinky Fellas*. In 1965, Turner renamed *Dinky Fellas* to *Wee Pals* and it became the first comic strip syndicated in the United States with a cast of ethnically diverse characters. The intent of his cartoons was to teach children history. Originally, only five newspapers picked it up. However, after the 1968 Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. more than 100 newspapers began carrying his cartoon.

In 1970, Turner’s popularity led him to become the co-chairman of the White House Conference on Children and Youth. In 2003, the National Cartoonists Society recognized his work by awarding him with the Milton Caniff Lifetime Achievement Award. He has been awarded numerous other awards and community distinctions, such as the Inter-Group Relations Award from the Anti-Defamation League and the Cartoon Art Museum’s Sparky Award named in honor of Charles Shultz. He also collaborated with students in the OASES Comic Book Preachers Class of Drawing at Westlake Middle School to create a book called *Wee Kids From Oakland*.

- 2) Retired Major Howard D. Jackson is a Vietnam era veteran and longtime resident of Oakland. He joined the Marine Corps in 1957 and served in Vietnam from 1966-1967. The Vietnam War was the first American war in which Black and White troops were not formally segregated, even though some de facto segregation still occurred. More than 300,000 Black Americans served in Vietnam. Though only about 12% of the U.S. population, Black service members were 16.3% of the armed forces, and up to 25% of enlisted men in the Army, but only 2% of officers across all branches. The proportional increase of Black service members in combat roles was a shift from

earlier conflicts such as World War II. Because of this over-representation, the casualty rate for Black troops was disproportionately higher.

Acts of overt racism on bases in Vietnam were common. Hundreds of reported racial incidents overseas were known to have crippled the armed forces' ability to fight. As one of the few Black officers in the Marine Corps, Major Jackson played a key role in ensuring that Black soldiers were treated with dignity and respect while working as an advisor to a Commanding General overseas. Consequently, in 1965 his efforts resulted in the creation of the first Human Relations Program in the Armed Forces. This position became the hallmark for similar positions that are still used throughout the military and in Human Resources Departments nationwide to this day.

As a Human Resources consultant in Oakland from 1981-1997, Jackson also developed training programs and executive seminars in labor relations, Personnel and Equal Opportunity Affairs and provided executive search services for many industry, government and educational organizations. He formed and served as Executive Director of an Oakland city-chartered organization which developed initial programs promoting minority employment, housing, educational and social opportunities to improve interracial relations, like he had successfully done in the military years earlier.

Currently, Major Jackson is a Special Consultant to the President of the California Maritime Academy, serving in this role since 1997, and has served as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the National Minority Military Museum Foundation since 1980. In recognition of his prestigious career and lifelong volunteer commitments, he was awarded the prestigious President of the United States Volunteer Service Award in 2023.

- 3) The Oakland Army Base is also known as the Oakland Army Terminal and is located at the Port of Oakland just south of the eastern entrance to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. Decommissioned on September 30, 1999, the base occupied 422 acres—consisting of 368 land acres and 54 submerged land acres. The late Major General John Stanford was the first and only Black Commanding General of the Oakland Army Base. He served in that role from 1984 to 1991.

During his illustrious military career, Major General Stanford served in Vietnam and in Operation Desert Storm. He was awarded many of our country's highest military awards, such as the Distinguished Flying Cross, several air medals, and the Distinguished Service Medal. Crosses are awarded to those who display extraordinary heroism amid a military operation.

The Distinguished Flying Cross is our nation's highest award for extraordinary aerial achievements. It is one of the few top military medals that exclusively involves actions taken during aerial flight. The award requires that the recipient display "heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight".

The Distinguished Service Medal is the third of the top 10 military medals. It is bestowed upon those who distinguish themselves by exceptionally meritorious

service to the government in a duty of great responsibility, in combat or otherwise, such as the Commanding Officer of a base like the Oakland Army Terminal.

WHEREAS, the commemoration of these three service members reflects their significant accomplishments and will appropriately highlight local Black military history; and

WHEREAS, the City Council intends to honor Major General John Stanford, Major Howard Jackson, and Sergeant Morrie Turner’s contributions to Oakland and our nation by retaining the existing street names, adding additional honorary street names and installing commemorative plaques or signs and intends that the costs associated with such a commemorative act will be borne by Regina Jackson and Associates; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Council of the City of Oakland hereby approves the commemorative renaming of the 1700 block of Maritime Street as ‘Sergeant Morrie Turner Way’; the 2100 block of Maritime Street as ‘Major Howard Jackson Way’; and the 000 block of Burma Road as ‘Major General John Stanford Way’; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the City Council directs the City Administrator to proceed with the commemorative designation of ‘Sergeant Morrie Turner Way’, ‘Major Howard Jackson Way’ and ‘Major General John Stanford Way’ and placement of sign(s) or plaque(s) to that effect on 1700 and 2100 blocks of Maritime Street and 000 block of Burma Road.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FIFE, GALLO, JENKINS, KALB, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, REID, AND
PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: _____
ASHA REED
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California