



**(CONTINUED FROM OCT. 21, 2020) - Bishop Henry Lee Barnwell Proposed Ceremonial Street Signage**

Request City Council approval to install ceremonial street signage recognizing Bishop Henry Lee Barnwell at the intersection of 19th Avenue and Roeser Road.

**Summary**

Based on biographical information provided by Bishop Barnwell's daughter Darlene Barnwell, Henry Lee Barnwell was born in 1934 in Blountstown, Florida, as the only child of Deacon Leroy and Eula Houston. Several experiences as a child led to his lifelong dedication to civil rights, social justice, and community advancement. He joined the United States Air Force to serve his country and completed a tour in Vietnam. During his service in the military, Technical Sergeant Barnwell received numerous awards, including the Expert Rifleman Award, National Defense Award, Heroism Award, Air Force Airman Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Award, and numerous other commendations. It was while he served in the military that Arizona became his home.

After being stationed in Chandler, Arizona, he strengthened his relationship with Jesus Christ under his mentor Pastor H. Y. Stevenson and answered the call to ministry. In 1966, Reverend Barnwell began his service as senior pastor of First New Life Missionary Baptist Church in Phoenix, Arizona, which at the time served about 30 members. The congregation grew to more than 1,000 members before his retirement after 40 years in ministry. He was ordained a bishop in 1999. Bishop Barnwell remained committed to the congregation of First New Life Missionary Baptist Church by serving as pastor emeritus until his passing.

Bishop Barnwell shared his wisdom and faith with countless people both inside and outside the church. He had an amazing ability to engage with and influence people from every walk of life. As such, he was consistently called upon to take many positions in the community and allowed his passion for people to make him a bridge builder and reconciler. When groups were at a stalemate, Bishop Barnwell was able to gather all involved to the table and gain resolution in such a way that all felt heard and valued. Recalling the experiences he witnessed as a child led Bishop Barnwell to be a lifelong supporter of civil rights and social justice. He was able to channel his passion and leverage his relationships with stakeholders from various governmental,

community, and clergy arenas to fight for civil and social justice for all.

Bishop Barnwell's love for the community was evident in all that he did. He served as a chaplain at the Adobe Mountain School for young men within the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections System. The Adobe Mountain Chapel was dedicated in Bishop Barnwell's honor in 2009. Bishop Barnwell provided counseling for the young men and teaching for chaplains at the school. He also was a strong advocate for much-needed supplies, donations, volunteers, and chaplains for the school. When Bishop Barnwell saw a need in the community, he was never afraid to speak up and fight for fulfillment of that need. This was evidenced in the work he did to get a traffic signal placed at the intersection of 19th Avenue and Roeser Road.

Bishop Barnwell's humanitarian and religious efforts reached well beyond the inner city. He served as president of the Interdenominational Ministry Alliance of Phoenix, Bible instructor of Zion Rest District Association, regional director for (Arizona and Mexico) National Evangelism Movement and first vice-president of the General Missionary Baptist State Convention of Arizona. Additionally, he conducted religious workshops through the United States, Canada, and Trinidad.

Bishop Barnwell also served as a board member of BridgeBuilders International, Phoenix Opportunities Industrialization Center, St. Mary's Food Bank, the Mayor's Human Relations Commission, and the Sheriff's Religious Advisory Committee of Maricopa County.

Perhaps his most championed cause was his efforts to declare Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 's birthday a state holiday in Arizona. After working along with several others, Bishop Barnwell saw the first holiday for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. realized in Arizona in 1993.

Bishop Barnwell was the recipient of numerous awards recognizing his contributions to our community. Those awards include:

- Recognition from the Maricopa County Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for his service and community support.
- The Calvin C. Goode Lifetime Achievement Award.
- The Blue Cross Blue Shield Ageless Hero Award.
- Named Arizona Pastor of the Year in 1989 and made an "Honorary Citizen" of Tucson, Arizona.
- Bishop Barnwell received the Living Legends Award from the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Committee.

Bishop Barnwell never let his age hinder him from the critical work needed for civil rights and social justice. He always believed persistence of these efforts and trust in the Lord would result in justice for all. To this very day, those who knew him still respond as he would when greeted: "Trusting in the Lord!".

The blue ceremonial signs will be placed on the mast arms of the northeast and southwest traffic signal poles at 19th Avenue and Roeser Road.

**Financial Impact**

The fabrication and installation costs of the ceremonial signs will be funded by Council District 4.

**Location**

19th Avenue and Roeser Road  
Council Districts: 7 and 8

**Responsible Department**

This item is submitted by Deputy City Manager Mario Paniagua and the Street Transportation Department.