

DATE: January 3, 2022

TO: Mayor, Rex Harden

Vice Mayor, Beverly Perkins

FROM: Debra Irving LeSane

REF: Irving Memorial Park

CITY OF POMPANO BEACH
OFFICE OF CITY MANAGER

22 JAN -5 PM 5: 01

I write to you on behalf of the Irving Family. The Irving family has a long lineage within the City of Pompano Beach, dating back to the late 1920's. The matriarch and patriarch of our family, English and Bessie Irving, relocated to Pompano from north Florida in 1928, with their four children: John Lawrence Irving, James Archer Irving, Robert Talmadge Irving, and Dorothy Althea Irving. Their family would later expand with the birth of three additional children who were all born in Pompano Beach: English Irving, Jr., Clifford Henry Irving, and Gloria Irving Jackson.

Upon their arrival, English Sr. owned and managed several farms, while his wife Bessie operated the city's first black owned grocery store, **Kidd's Grocery Store**, and a rooming house. The Irvings made their home at 743 Hammondville Road, now known as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. The building was initially a wooden 2-story structure, hand-built by English and his sons. This wooden building would grow to become a pillar of the northwest community, earning the namesake, "Bess Irving's Corner." Mrs. Irving prepared hot meals and provided engaging music, which played from a coin operated juke box for teens and young adults of the northwest community for decades. Years later, this property became home the city's first Black doctor and chiropractor, Dr. Robert T. Irving. It was also home to the city's first black-owned Insurance Agency, operated and ran by another son, English Irving, Jr. In its later years it functioned as a pool hall, managed by the youngest Irving son, Clifford Irving.

This letter is to request for the landscaped area adjacent to the parking lot behind the 743 building, be named, "Irving Memorial Park" in honor of the Irving Family. Please advise me of the next steps needed to proceed with this request. I look forward to your reply.

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