



September 7, 2020

The Honorable Zulfat Suara
Council Lady-at-Large
Metropolitan Nashville Government
Historic Courthouse Square
Nashville, TN 37210

Dear Council Lady Suara,

It is with great honor and respect that I write to extend the support of American Baptist College to the ordinance to rename Fifth Avenue in honor of the late U.S. Representative John Robert Lewis to Representative John Lewis Way. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, students and alumni, we proudly join with the Minority Caucus of the Metropolitan City Council with this well-deserved project.

Representative Lewis came to American Baptist College at the age of 17, from his hometown of Troy, Alabama. From his beginning at the College he became involved with Civil Rights; Voter Registration, Lunch-Counter Sit-ins and the Freedom Rides were his foundation to his outstanding public service career. In fact, he was unable to attend his graduation ceremony at American Baptist College in 1961 because he had been jailed in Jackson, Mississippi. He was incarcerated because of his activities with the Freedom Riders.

It is because of Representative John Lewis and others involved in the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s that Nashville became the first southern major city to start the desegregation of public places. This city; Music City, USA, the Athens of the South, the capital of Tennessee should show its strength and tenacity in this first step to honor this great man of humble beginnings, Representative John Lewis.

American Baptist College Baptist College wholeheartedly supports this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Forrest E. Harris

Forrest E. Harris, Sr.
President

FEH:PQ:mac



FISK
UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

September 8, 2020

Via email to Zulfat.suara@nashville.gov on 09/08/2020 at 8:45am CT

Zulfat Suara
At Large Council Member
Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County
Metropolitan Council Office
One Public Square, Suite 204
P.O. Box 196300
Nashville, TN 37219-6300

Dear Councilwoman Suara:

It is both an honor and a privilege to write a letter of support for the initiative to rename *downtown Nashville's* Fifth Avenue to Rep. John Lewis Way.

To honor our esteemed Fisk University alumnus in such a way would be so befitting of the late Congressman John Lewis, who became dedicated to the civil rights movement while he was a student in *Nashville*. As a Fisk University student, Lewis served as President of the Nashville Student Non-Violent Movement and stood at the forefront of sit-in protests in downtown Nashville. He never allowed his focus on Social Justice, Equality, and Civil Rights to be stunted by the racism and discrimination that he and others experienced. Instead, Lewis reached high as a leader, leaving a most impressive, barrier-breaking, and inspiring legacy in America. Congressman Lewis has often stated that he was inspired to get in trouble. During a visit to Nashville in 2012, he said, "I was inspired to get in the way. For more that 50 years, I've been getting in the way. I've been getting in trouble – good trouble, necessary trouble".

We, at Fisk University, applaud Congressman Lewis, a 'Son Ever on the Altar' for his courage, his vision, his discipline and his "good trouble, necessary trouble".

Sincerely,

Vann R. Newkirk, Sr., Ph.D.
Interim President



COLIN V. REED
CHAIRMAN & CEO

As the owners and stewards of Ryman Auditorium, we at Ryman Hospitality Properties have a deep appreciation for the rich and layered history of our downtown streets. While many know 5th Avenue North as the location where fans lined up every Saturday night for more than 30 years for a chance to experience the Grand Ole Opry at its most famous former home, there is another layer of history embedded in these sidewalks that should be recognized and commemorated: Nashville's prominent role in the Civil Rights Movement.

At the center of that legacy is U.S. Representative John Lewis, who was a student at American Baptist Theological Seminary when he successfully led a group of college students to sit-in at downtown lunch counters on 5th Avenue North. Following the Nashville Sit-Ins, Rep. Lewis became part of the movement to desegregate interstate bus travel in the south. Lewis was one of the original 13 Freedom Riders who departed Washington, D.C., for New Orleans, Louisiana. Four months later, in Nashville, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. presented Lewis with a scholarship on the Ryman stage at a "Tribute to the Freedom Riders" concert held there during the 1961 annual meeting of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Though Rep. Lewis endured physical and verbal attacks and life-threatening injuries as a leader of the movement, his quest for equality, justice and freedom for Black Americans never faltered. His contributions to our country started here in Nashville, and it is time we honor his legacy on the very streets where the Civil Rights Movement took shape.

The legacy of the Ryman Auditorium is as rich and layered as the streets that surround it, and we are proud that Rep. Lewis and the Civil Rights Movement will forever be part of that history. His contributions to our country started here in Nashville, and today, we call for 5th Avenue North to be renamed Rep. John Lewis Way to honor his commitment to non-violent protest and the ongoing fight for equality and justice.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Colin Reed", written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Colin Reed

Suara, Zulfat

From: Kyle Young <KYoung@CountryMusicHallofFame.org>
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 5:03 PM
To: Sam Reed
Subject: Letter in support of John Lewis Way



HONOR THY MUSIC®

August 14, 2020

Dear committee:

First things first: the question of whether it is appropriate and right to re-name a major Nashville thoroughfare (Fifth Avenue, from Korean Veterans' Boulevard at the south end, across Broadway to Jefferson Street on the north side), "John Lewis Way," in honor of the recently deceased congressman and Civil Rights leader, would seem to have been answered long ago.

Mr. Lewis, after strapping on his "marching shoes," transferred that shoe leather to dirt roads, small-town streets, and the intimidating shoulders of highways throughout the South, in an arduous, lifelong hike toward his goal of spreading love in pursuit of truth, justice, and equality for all people.

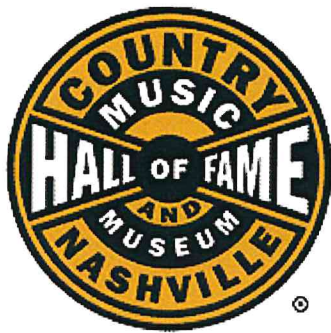
Really, given the number and nature of his accomplishments, Mr. Lewis's name should already be on many streets, in many cities, and certainly, it will be someday. Few persons in history have enjoyed such universal acclaim and respect while working to dislodge the status quo.

Had he never come to Nashville at all, it still would be appropriate to name a Nashville street for Lewis, in recognition of his many accomplishments, but Lewis, who grew up in the country near Troy, Alabama, (Martin Luther King often called him, affectionately, "the boy from Troy") did come North, to study at Nashville's American Baptist College. He also attended Fisk University and on February 13, 1960, with coaching and instruction in non-violent resistance

from Jim Lawson, Lewis sat down at Woolworth’s lunch counter, and ordered a Coke and a hamburger. All hell broke loose—for the next ten plus years.

Certainly the most important walk Lewis took came over five years later in Selma, when he led a group on a treacherous stroll across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The march to Montgomery that ensued was a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement. Now Lewis has taken his last “long journey home.” We should celebrate him in every way we can. Lest we forget.

KY



August 13, 2020

Councilmember Zulfat Suara
One Public Square, Suite 204,
Nashville, Tennessee 37219-6300

Dear Councilmember Suara,

As a developer who has contributed the skyline in Nashville over the last 30 years, most recently adding 505 at the corner of 5th and Church, I have a deep appreciation for the rich and layered history of our downtown streets. While many know 5th Avenue North for historic venues like The Ryman Auditorium, there is another layer of history embedded in its sidewalks that should be recognized and commemorated: Nashville's prominent role in the Civil Rights Movement.

At the center of that legacy is U.S. Representative John Lewis, who was a student at American Baptist Theological Seminary when he successfully led a group of college students to sit-in at downtown lunch counters on 5th Avenue North. Following the Nashville Sit-Ins, Rep. Lewis became part of the movement to desegregate interstate bus travel in the south. Lewis was one of the original 13 Freedom Riders who departed Washington, D.C., for New Orleans, Louisiana. Four months later, in Nashville, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. presented Lewis with a scholarship on the Ryman stage at a "Tribute to the Freedom Riders" concert held there during the 1961 annual meeting of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Though Representative Lewis endured physical and verbal attacks and life-threatening injuries as a leader of the movement, his quest for equality, justice and freedom for Black Americans never faltered. His contributions to our country started here in Nashville, and it is time we honor his legacy on the very streets where the Civil Rights Movement took shape.

I am proud that Representative Lewis and the Civil Rights Movement will forever be part of that history. His contributions to our country started here in Nashville, and today, we call for 5th Avenue North to be renamed Rep. John Lewis Way to honor his commitment to non-violent protest and the ongoing fight for equality and justice.

Very truly yours,

GIARRATANA, LLC

By: _____



Anthony D. Giarratana, President

cc: The Honorable John Cooper