

January 24, 2022

Judge KP George
Commissioners of Fort Bend County
301 Jackson St, Richmond, TX 77469

RE: Naming of the Fort Bend County Law Library

Dear Fort Bend County Judge KP George and Commissioners:

We, the family of Willie Melton, are so honored and uplifted by the many community members that have floated the idea of naming a public institution – the Fort Bend County Law Library - after our father, grandfather, uncle, **other loved ones**, and a pivotal member from the community of Kendleton, Texas in Fort Bend County.

One of the great accomplishments that Willie Melton was instrumental in making happen, along with many other triumphs, was the great fight that was waged between the communities of color and the Jay Bird's White Man's Union in Fort Bend County which controlled the white primary rule. This rule excluded Negroes from county politics and blocked them from being elected as public officials.

During the early 50's, Willie Melton (better known as Papa to his grandchildren) had a dream of ending the political discrimination against his people in Fort Bend County. This fight would eventually benefit other surrounding counties and maybe even the entire nation as well, if successful. He engaged the assistance of NAACP leaders who also believed in the cause. In addition, Willie was personally acquainted with the revered Thurgood Marshall, the former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, who advised and assisted him in making this dream a reality.

Willie Melton was instrumental in securing a petition along with others requesting that qualified negro citizens of Fort Bend County be allowed to participate and vote in all elections held in the County. The fight was lengthy, and there were many obstacles along the way. However, Willie Melton never gave up on his dream – a lesson that we take to heart every day.

He became the President of the Fort Bend County Civic Club and along with others who believed in the cause was able to raise enough funds to appeal to the Supreme Court after losing the first fight with the Jay Birds Texas state court decision who ruled against them. The fight was successful in May of 1953 and received a majority opinion from the Supreme Court that Negroes had the right to vote in the primaries of Fort Bend County and abolished this discriminatory practice nationwide

The dedication and the financial support given by Willie Melton and others was well worth the freedom gained in allowing the Negroes in Fort Bend County to participate and vote in local elections.

It is because of Willie Melton that people of color gained the ability to participate in elections in Fort Bend and realize the dream of actually electing public officials that come from minority communities.

We are proud to see that since those days, in 2018 we have finally elected people of color to major countywide seats from County Judge KP George to the District Attorney, Commissioner, and much more.

Naming the Fort Bend County Law Library in the honor of Willie Melton will enshrine his legacy and serve as a lesson to all those in the pursuit of justice and equality in the Fort Bend County Justice Center.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wilma Jean Melton Randle

Carl Melton

Ashely Ruth Zomalt

Samuella Melton

Franklin Melton

Carolyn Jones

Dorothy Melton

Ruby Rodgers

Veronica Melton Harris

Darrick Melton

Sharon Melton Watkins Allen

Estonia Adams

Kenyon Melton

Ennis Humphrey, Jr.

Janice Melton

Christopher Humphrey

Marcus Melton

Dornesha Watkins

Felicia Melton

Alexander Watkins

Datryse Melton Brown

Willie Watkins

Clifford Brown

Adreik Harris, Jr.

Datrele Brown

Javonte Robinson

Curtis Brown

Denise Humphrey

Francisco Luna

Angelique Buster

Marcos Cartazar

Paul Buster

Markesha Melton

Ashtun Harris

Cameron Melton

Shamarian Harris

Marcus Melton Jr.

Ronell Taylor

Avia Melton

Tawanna Taylor

Kenya Melton

Ashanna Harris

Adreik Harris

Joya Harris

Venice Zomalt

Lexia Shelton

Lester Shelton

Saundria Zomalt Swint

Ernest Zomalt

Leslie Zomalt