



**BRIAN A. BENJAMIN**  
Chairperson

**ANDREW LASSALLE**  
District Manager

### **Dr. Yosef (Johannes) Ben-Jochannan Street Co-naming Resolution**

**RESOLUTION:** To support the co-naming of the southwest corner of 125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard to be co-named to DR.YOSEF (JOHANNES) BEN-JOCHANNAN WAY.

**WHEREAS,** Dr. Yosef (Johannes) ben-Jochannan, affectionately known as Dr. Ben; husband, father, brother and friend to all was born December 31st, 1918 to a Puerto Rican mother and an Ethiopian father in the Beta Israel community in Gondor, Ethiopia. Dr. Ben was formally educated in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Brazil. He studied abroad and in the continental United States. His quest for knowledge was not limited and he continued his studies worldwide. He received several degrees in his lifetime, both earned and honorary. He continues to this day to receive post mortem honors, and;

**WHEREAS,** Dr. Ben was a prolific writer and author. He wrote and published 49 books and papers that documented his findings challenging popular and often derogatory notions of Africa and its people. He was a world traveler and his frequent trips to Egypt and the Nile Valley provided direct access to people, monuments, sacred texts and primary documents that he used to challenge derogatory notions. Dr. Ben led many excursions to the Mother Land allowing thousands of students, teachers, professors, scholars, activists and the common man to the Nile Valley to witness for themselves what he had seen and learned about African people, and;

**WHEREAS,** Dr. Ben's better known works are *Black Man of the Nile*, *African Origins of the Major Western Religions and Africa*, *Mother of Western Civilization*. Dr. Ben's central themes in all of his lectures were the majesty of the woman through ancient and modern times and the primary contribution of Nile civilizations in history, and;

**WHEREAS,** Dr. Ben is recognized as the last of a distinguished list of Black Scholars who devoted their lives to the study of ancient Africa, and;

**WHEREAS,** Dr. Ben partnered with Professor George Simmons and founded Alkebu-Ian Foundation in Harlem, located on Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard for many years and later with Gil Noble Television journalist and host of "*Like It Is*" on national television. In his search for truth he collaborated and worked closely with Minister Farrakhan, the Reverend Al Sharpton, Sister Kefa and Brother Bill Jones of the First World Alliance and a host of many others. Dr. Ben often referred to Dr. John Henrik Clarke as his brother. Their relationship could not have been closer as colleagues and friends, and;

**WHEREAS,** Dr. Ben founded/co-founded and inspired the creation of several organizations which included the Africana Studies Department of City College in New York City, African Nationalist in America (ANIA), The Blue Nile, The Craft and Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAP) to name a few. He held various executive and prominent positions in several premiere organizations, schools, boards and artistic programs. Together, Dr. Ben with George

Simmons published many of Dr. Ben's early works through the Alkebu-Ian Foundation in Harlem, and;

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben will be remembered as a brilliant historian, committed to the uplifting and enlightenment of the global African Community. He will also be remembered as charismatic, with an enormous sense of humor, and;

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben's daughter, Ms. Ruth Jochannan, presented his legacy and street co-naming request at a Special Street co-naming forum held by the Transportation, Historic Preservation and Landmarks Committee on April 25th, 2017, and;

**WHEREAS**, on Tuesday, May 9th, a quorum of the Transportation, Historic Preservation and Landmarks Committee voted unanimously; (six yes and zero no) in favor of the proposed street co-naming, and;

**WHEREAS**, three hundred and thirty signatures were submitted along with numerous Letters of Support from neighbors, community-based organizations and elected officials, and;

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Yosef (Johannes) ben-Jochannan worked in his early years as a draftsman on 125th Street. Not being satisfied with his chosen field he studied Anthropology which lit his flame to understand his own African history. He realized the lies that had been told to African people were the foundation of our ignorance. He set out only to right the wrongs. His works and dedication "woke up" several generations of people worldwide. In doing so, he dedicated his entire life to the proper education of black people, and;

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Yosef (Johannes) ben-Jochannan began his journey on the corner of 125<sup>th</sup> Street and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard in Harlem, in front of the famed Theresa Hotel, where he lectured to all who were willing to listen and captured the curiosity of those who just happened to hear his word as they passed by. They were always certain to come back for another lesson, and;

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Yosef (Johannes) ben-Jochannan worked with Harlem's youth through HARYOU ACT in 1967. Dr. Ben worked as adjunct Professor (1973-1987) at Cornell University in the Africana Studies and Research Center and lectured at all if not most of New York City's institutions of higher learning. He did not exclude kindergarten to 12th grades or even Senior Centers. He could be seen on many occasions leaving commencement exercises where he was a guest speaker. He often was heard saying, "no ear is too young or aged to hear the truth about our African Heritage". He also taught at Malcolm King College, City College and Rutgers University. Dr. Ben held an honorary faculty position with the Rabbinical Academy at Beth Shalom Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation in Brooklyn. Dr. Ben, a polyglot, taught in Aswan, many African countries and lectured throughout Europe, and;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Manhattan Community Board 10 recognizes and honors Dr. Yosef (Johannes) Ben-Jochannan for his contributions to Africans, Africans by descent and all humanity by promoting the study of Africa and people of African descent in the Diaspora. Dr. Ben wrote/authored over 40 books, lectured and traveled the world awakening the interest of Africans to their history and their rightful place in "his-story". CB 10 recommends that the southwest corner of 125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard be co-named to DR.YOSEF (JOHANNES) BEN-JOCHANNAN WAY.

The Historic Preservation and Transportation Committee of CB 10 voted on this item May 9<sup>th</sup> 2017 with a vote of 6 in favor 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.