

City of Columbus, GA
Honorary Designation Application

(Please Print or Type)

APPLICANT NAME: Dr. Frank Brown

PHONE NUMBER: 706-566-0702

ADDRESS: 2560 Old River Road, Fortson GA 31808

NAME OF HONOREE: "Miss Joni" Ressmeyer Swimming Pool
(AS IT WOULD APPEAR ON SIGN OR FACILITY)

LIVING OR DECEASED
(CIRCLE ONE)

REQUESTED LOCATION: Double Churches Pool

TYPE OF TRIBUTE OR REMEMBRANCE: In memory of

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA, WHICH ARE USED IN THE EVALUATION FOR EACH REQUEST FOR AN HONORARY DESIGNATION. USE ADDITIONAL PAPER IF REQUIRED. IN ADDITION, HONOREE MUST BE OF GOOD MORAL CHARACTER.

HISTORICAL AND/OR CULTURAL INFLUENCE OF THE HONOREE ON THE CITY:

___ There is no greater cultural influence one person can have on a community than to focus on the lives of the children who live there. To live in a community in the south in a town like Columbus surrounded by lakes, rivers and pools the safety of these children who will be in and around the water must be a priority. However, to have one woman make it her single life goal to teach almost 3 generations of children in the Chattahoochee Valley to swim is unprecedented. Many of believe as individuals we can have little impact on our community. Joni Ressmeyer was not one of those. She believed if she could teach one child to survive falling into a pool or body of water then the years of teaching children how to swim was worth it. Generations of children have become adults and never learned how to swim, creating a fear that was simply unacceptable to Joni Ressmeyer.

PROVIDE PROOF OF SIGNIFICANT LINEAGE OR FAMILY TIES TO THE CITY:

_Joni and her husband Dr. Bob Ressmeyer moved to Columbus Georgia 63 years ago. They had two sons, Scott and Mark Ressmeyer who grew up in the public school system. Scott Ressmeyer, better known for being a co-owner of Country's Barbecue has had a significant impact on the community through his involvement with the Midnight Express and the Miracle Ride. Prior to his death, Mark was known to many as mentor to many young baseball players. The legacy this family has made in service to their community is long. Both Scott and Mark were witness to their mother's impact on teaching children to swim. Many citizens of Columbus will remember Joni as a fabulous cook, supporter of the Miss Georgia organization and Life College in Atlanta but mostly for her hands on impact on children and even adults in the community through her swimming lessons.

ESTABLISH CLEAR GEOGRAPHICAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE AREA OR PLACE OF INTEREST OF THE HONOREE:

__It is all about the pool, the body of water that offered itself a safe place to teach young and old to swim with confidence or at least enough to get to the edge and call for help. There is no better place than Double Churches Pool to hold her name. A name that many who swim there will recognize. Joni and Bob lived in Columbus and later in Fortson where her swimming lessons continued. Her dedication to Columbus was important. It was where she felt she could make the greatest impact, right her community.

CLEARLY DEFINED COMMUNITY OR PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION MADE BY THE HONOREE:

__Joni taught infants, toddlers, school age and adults to swim. She could tread water for hours teaching one group to swim across her pool with a few timid ones clinging to her back where she put them to feel safe yet still be in the water. The little ones, as young as 6 months she taught to float up; with their head above water and get to the side of the pool calling for help if necessary. She taught toddlers to come up to the surface, kick to the side and climb out. She taught infants with wet and heavy diapers to get to the surface and cry out. She taught young swimmers and teens to get into the water in jeans, be able to pull them off and use as a flotation device to keep their heads above water. She taught good swimmers how to calmly swim out of a rip tide without panicking. She taught Elana Amos to swim when she was building her first pool and terrified of the water.

Her students remember jumping off the rock at her Fortson home, a big step in overcoming their fear. They remember being given the opportunity to dive for coins they could keep if they got them but most of all they remember the best ending to a week of swimming lessons a Friday ice-cream treat before they went home each of them giving her a hug, telling her “I love you Miss Joni” and I’ll see you next week.

Joni had a crying room. But it was for the parents not the children. She knew her kids were safe with her, but the parents were a little harder to convince. It didn’t take them long before they realized that the best thing for a child frightened of the water was to learn how to conquer that fear and learn to feel confident in the water and therefore enjoy a summer in Columbus as her water babies. She taught tens of thousands of children to swim in over 50 years of lessons. How would there be a better legacy for her than to name a community pool in her memory?

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: _____

DATE: June 5, 2024

Send this completed application to the Deputy Clerk of Council at mclmore.lindsey@columbusga.org

For questions, please contact the Clerk of Council’s office at (706) 653-4013.

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE:
