

Eric Knepp

Department of Public Works, Parks Division

210 Martin Luther King Blvd., Room 104

Madison, WI 53703

Dear Eric and Park Commissioners

I hope that this note finds you well and finding joy. I wanted to write you to lend my support in renaming the Yahara River Bike Path to Ed Jepsen Way. While I did not know Ed personally, having lived and raised five children in Madison since 1979, my paths have crossed with Ed a few times over the years. Before writing this letter, I had no idea how instrumental and impactful Ed was, and by renaming the bike path, Ed's legacy remains for others to emulate and honor. I cannot tell you how many hundreds of children and families that I have served in various capacities, that have used and enjoyed the path running under the bridges to get to O'Keeffe, to connect with their families and friends between the Tenney and Marquette neighborhoods. In my mind, as I think of the thousands of bike trips I took along that path, I had never realized the impact that Ed has gifted the city until now.

I know that renaming park lands should not be taken lightly. I also know that as a Black man, there are sadly few places named after BIPOC people that have made lasting contributions to our overall community. I look at Ed's advocacy and work with a different perspective when I see more BIPOC children and families riding along the path -perhaps to attend one of the many free neighborhood festivals or to join friends fishing on the Yahara. Perhaps I am bias, but I cannot escape amazing memories when I worked at O'Keeffe, and would walk with students along the path to meet at Tenney for their graduations. I sincerely hope that others can hold Ed in their hearts, and by renaming the bike path, we allow for others to be inspired by his good deeds.

Sending you my best wishes and care.

Brian Benford

Alderperson District 6

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