


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 18, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: REPORT OF THE NAMING COMMITTEE ON VARIOUS PROPOSALS

ISSUE: Consideration of report from the Naming Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive this report and:

- (1) Approve the change in the name of the Alexandria Black History Resource Center to the Alexandria Black History Museum;
- (2) Instruct the City Manager to ensure that, as part of the upcoming planning study of the waterfront to be undertaken by the Department of Planning & Zoning, consideration is given to providing, somewhere along the waterfront, an appropriate recognition of Colonel John Fitzgerald; and
- (3) Authorize staff (a) to prepare an interpretative narrative highlighting the contributions of F. Clinton Knight in saving Gadsby's Tavern that would be placed next to his portrait which now hangs in the American Legion portion of the Gadsby's Tavern building, and (b) to request the American Legion post to re-name the ballroom on the Legion side of Gadsby's after Mr. Knight.

DISCUSSION: The Naming Committee, consisting of Vice Mayor Pepper, Councilwoman Woodson, and myself, have met twice since last June. On these occasions, the Committee has considered a number of requests: (1) a request to name the new skate park after Schuyler Hamilton Jones; (2) a request to change the name of the Alexandria Black History Resource Center to the Alexandria Black History Museum; (3) a request to rename Waterfront Park after Colonel John Fitzgerald; and (4) a request to name a City facility after F. Clinton Knight. The Committee's decisions and/or recommendations on these requests are addressed below.

1. Request to Name the Skate Park after Schuyler Hamilton Jones

On April 15, 2004, the Co-Chairs of the Friends of the Skate Park, Carol Freeman and Peter Smeallie, submitted a formal proposal to the Committee for the naming of the skate park after Schuyler Hamilton Jones (see Attachment 1). (See also Attachment 2, a letter to the Mayor from

Thomas J. Lockett, on behalf of the Lockett family, indicating its support for the Friends' proposal.) At the Committee's May 18 meeting, Ms. Freeman and Mr. Smeallie presented the group's proposal. They highlighted the strong community support for naming the skate park for Mr. Jones, and pointed out the ways in which he contributed to the park, as a supporter, fundraiser and ramp designer.

After much discussion, the consensus of the Committee was that the contributions of Mr. Jones do not meet the criteria in the City Council's Naming Policy that apply to the naming of City facilities, and that this position would be conveyed to City Council. The Council's policy for naming City facilities (Attachment 3) contains Naming Guidelines to be applied, by the Naming Committee and Council, in reviewing proposals to name or re-name City facilities. With respect to individuals for whom City facilities may be named, the guidelines state in part:

"Preferred names include: persons, living or deceased, who have made a significant contribution to the City in terms of public service, involvement in civic or cultural activities over an extended period of time, or significant financial investment, and whose contribution(s) may be related to the facility being named."

As indicated, the Committee did not believe that the contributions of Mr. Jones, while certainly significant and notable, met these Naming Policy guidelines. As a result, the Committee determined not to move forward with the process, outlined in the Naming Policy, to develop a naming recommendation for the skate park to be submitted to Council.

2. Request to Re-name the Black History Resource Center

The proposal to change the name of the Alexandria Black History Resource Center to the Alexandria Black History Museum was referred to the Naming Committee by Council at its January 27, 2004, legislative meeting. As indicated in the docket item then considered by Council (see Attachment 4), the term "Resource Center" no longer appropriately describes the activities that take place at the facility on North Alfred Street which collects, preserves and interprets the history of the African-American community in Alexandria and Northern Virginia. In light of these activities, placing the term "Museum" within the title of the institution is felt to more accurately depict what the institution is, in fact, all about.

After discussing the proposal and noting the substantial support in favor of the renaming, the Committee voted to recommend to Council that the name of the Alexandria Black History Resource Center be changed to the Alexandria Black History Museum.

3. Request to Re-name Waterfront Park after Colonel John Fitzgerald

This proposal was considered by Council at its June 24, 2003, meeting. At that time (see Attachment 5), the Naming Committee did not recommend to Council the re-naming of

Waterfront Park after Colonial Fitzgerald, in part because the Committee believed that the name of Founders Park already honors the City's early trustees and founders, like Colonel Fitzgerald. The Committee did recommend, however, that an appropriate recognition of Colonel Fitzgerald could be provided in new waterfront signage that eventually will be placed in Founders Park.

Early this year, the question of renaming Waterfront Park in honor of Colonel Fitzgerald surfaced again (see Attachment 6). At its May 18 meeting, again considered this matter and voted to recommend to Council that an appropriate recognition of Colonel Fitzgerald, located along the waterfront, be considered as part of the waterfront planning process that will be underway in the near future.

4. Request to Name a City Facility after F. Clinton Knight

In June 2003 (see Attachment 5), the Committee reported to Council that, after receiving staff input, it would consider opportunities to recognize Mr. Knight either in Gadsby's Tavern or the Legion Hall. (See also Attachment 7, article on Mr. Knight in Gazette Packet.) At its May 18 meeting, the Committee concluded it would be appropriate to have the Office of Historic Alexandria prepare an interpretative narrative that would highlight Mr. Knight's contributions in saving Gadsby's Tavern, which would be placed next to his portrait that now hangs in the American Legion. The Committee concluded it would also be appropriate for staff to contact the American Legion to see whether it would consider re-naming the ballroom on the Legion side of Gadsby's after Mr. Knight.

ATTACHMENTS;

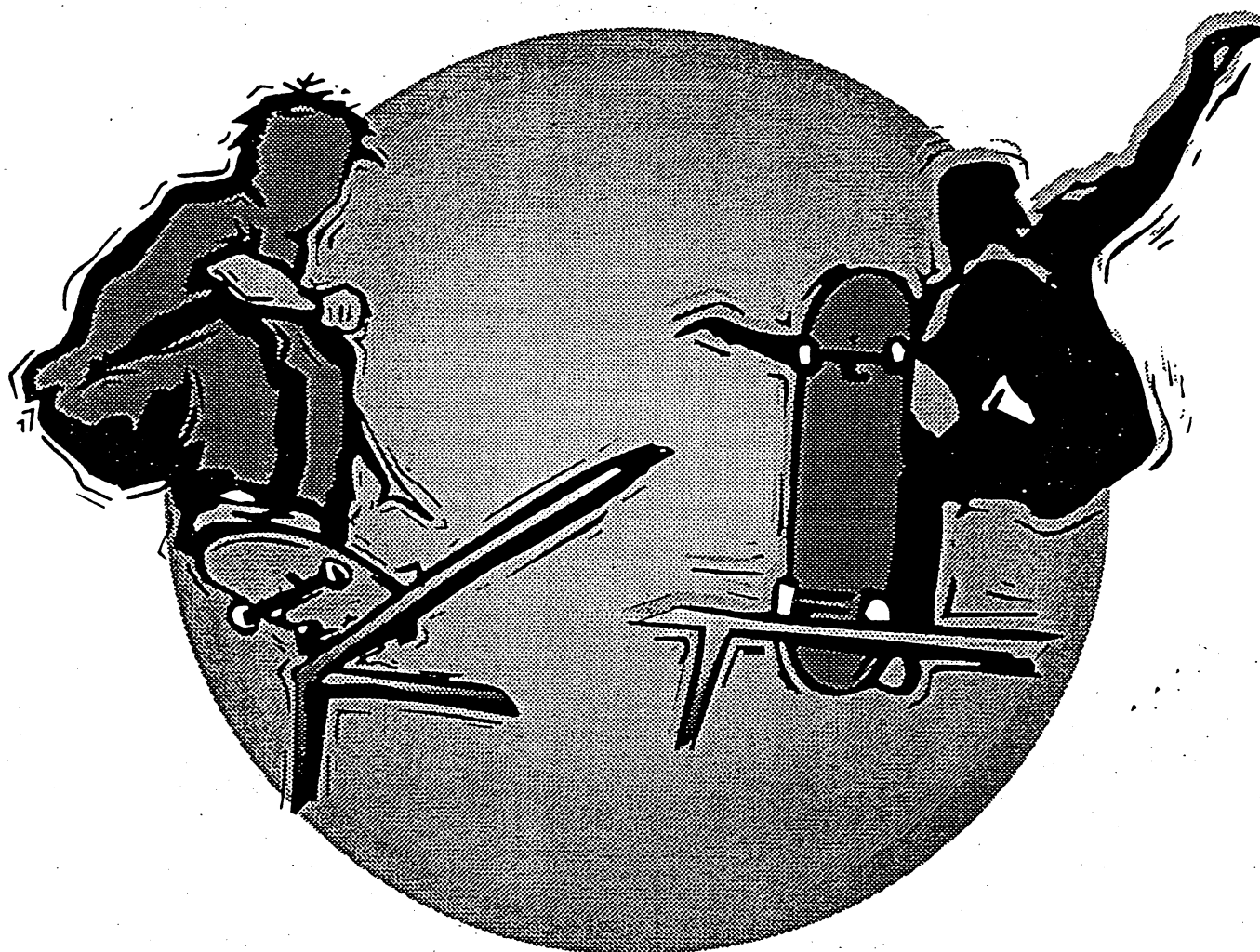
1. Proposal for the Naming of the Skate Park
2. Letter, dated April 14, 2004, from Thomas Luckett to Mayor Euille
3. Alexandria City Council Policy for Naming City Facilities
4. January 27, 2004, Docket Memorandum on the Re-naming of the Black History Resource Center
5. June 24, 2003, Docket Memorandum on Report of Naming Committee
6. Letter, dated January 22, 2004, to City Manager from Pat Troy and Douglas Thurman
7. Alexandria Gazette Packet article on "Clinton Knight and GW," by Kathleen Benson, granddaughter F. Clinton Knight

Friends of the Skatepark



Alexandria, Virginia

Proposal for the Naming of the Skatepark



Submitted to the
Naming Committee of Alexandria City Council
April 15, 2004.



April 12, 2004

The Hon. Del Pepper
The Hon. Joyce Woodson
Mr. Phil Sunderland
C/o Naming Committee
Alexandria City Council
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Councilwomen ^{Del}Pepper and ^{Joyce}Woodson and Mr. ^{Phil}Sunderland:

We are respectfully requesting the naming committee to recommend to City Council that Alexandria's skatepark be named "The Schuyler Hamilton Jones Skatepark at Luckett Field".

Since Schuyler's tragic death in September 2003, many members of the community have expressed their support for naming the skatepark after Schuyler. At the October 18, 2003 public hearing, students from TC Williams High School and Bishop Ireton testified on behalf of this request and presented City Council with petitions with almost 400 signatures that had been collected in less than 2 weeks. The Friends of the Skate Park, an all-volunteer group that raised more than \$50,000 in private funds to buy ramps and other equipment, unanimously signed a letter, dated October 1st, supporting this request.

Schuyler Jones was 16 years old when he died. He didn't have as long as most of us to make a difference in his community. However, during his short life and in the way he died, he has made a major contribution to the Alexandria community. John Porter, Principal of TC Williams High School, writes that "*Schuyler's actions prior to his unfortunately tragic death may serve the youth of our community and our community at large for many years to come. ... The way in which he tried to avoid a violent confrontation on what has now been determined to be two occasions ... may well serve as a preventative message for youth for the future... The message that violence does not solve problems is one that I know many of his classmates carry with them daily.*"

Jack Taylor, who has strongly supported the construction of the skatepark and who donated a car for a raffle as well as ramps, strongly supports the naming. "*It is my hope that by naming the skatepark after Schuyler Hamilton Jones, it will remind kids for many years to come about this violent act and perhaps thinking of it may prevent another occurrence. I would like every parent and child in this city to remember this tragedy forever. I want to talk to our children and grandchildren about this and I want children to talk to each other about it.*"

Randolph Sengel, the Commonwealth Attorney who prosecuted the three boys who were responsible for the assault and death of Schuyler, concludes that a sixteen-year-old child can leave a worthy legacy:

"As a prosecutor I have lived with this case for six months. The events leading to Schuyler's death involved two instances in which he was attacked and assaulted by others his own age. In both cases, including the night of his death, he backed away and

indicated his desire not to fight, in spite of his impressive physical stature. I found this remarkable...

If you read through the scores of messages posted on a memorial website, mostly from other young people who knew him, you learn that he was an accomplished athlete, a musician, a skateboarder. But what truly set him apart from other kids his own age was not his accomplishments or his abilities, but the way he wore them. He was self-effacing, kind, compassionate, thoughtful, and never considered using his physical size or strength to unfair advantage. He did not use alcohol or drugs.

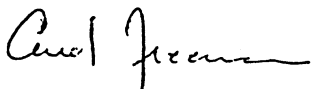
At sixteen, Schuyler Jones knew how to live as many adults never are able to: with compassion, with thoughtfulness, and with grace... Schuyler Jones did what many adults fail to do everyday: he continued to make right choices even when it was obvious that to do so would subject him to serious physical harm. Regardless of one's age, it is difficult to fathom a more obviously heroic trait. I respectfully suggest that if our young people are to learn from this case, they need to see that the adults in this community recognize and validate the manner in which Schuyler Jones acted. Naming this skatepark in Schuyler's honor would help bring this lesson home."

We propose to work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to design a sign for the skatepark, as well as a plaque that briefly describes Schuyler's life and death. We will help raise the money for the sign and the plaque.

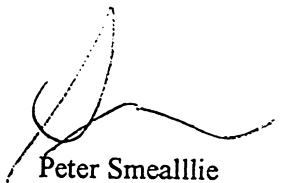
Attached are letters of support, copies of the petitions that were circulated prior to the October 2003 public hearing, and some selected quotes from the RIP website that was created September 14 by one of Schuyler's friends.

We are available to meet with the naming committee to discuss our proposal and to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Carol Freeman
Co-chair, Friends of the Skate Park



Peter Smeallie
Co-chair, Friends of the Skate Park

Attachments:

- Letters of Support from the Friends of the Alexandria Skate Park, Jack Taylor, Randolph Sengel, John Porter and Thomas Luckett
- Petitions with 381 signatures
- Quotes from the RIP website "In Memory of Schuyler Jones"

1/14/04 To: Vice Mayor Pepper
Councilwoman Woodson
City Manager

THOMAS J. LUCKETT CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
4906 RUTLAND PLACE ALEXANDRIA, VA
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22304

From: The Mayor

2004 APR 15 P 2:20
For Consideration by The Naming Committee

April 14, 2004

Williams Euille, Mayor
City of Alexandria, Virginia

Dear Mayor Euille:

In recent weeks I have been in conversations with Mr. Peter Smealie regarding the naming of the new skate park on Duke Street. Our discussions have centered on the name of the over-all property and of the new skate facility.

We are in agreement and would urge the City to consider the following:

1. The name of the property will be "James T. Luckett Jr. Memorial Field".
2. Major signage will designate the property as described above on the primary sign on Duke Street, visible to the public.
3. The skate park will be named "Schuyler Hamilton Jones Skatepark at Luckett Field".
4. A sign identifying the skate park as described above will be located at the entrance to the skate park itself. It will be "secondary" in nature, "not highly visible from Duke Street or Quaker Lane" and not a "directional sign." In other words, would be viewable by skateboarders as they enter the fence to the skate park.

Our family, proud to have our beloved uncle/brother memorialized at this athletic facility in the City, will be equally proud to have the name of Schuler Jones memorialized at the skate park. We support the use and naming of the skate park as described in 1-4 above.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Luckett
703-370-9347

Effective Date: March 12, 1999
Clarified: January 23, 2004

ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL POLICY FOR NAMING CITY FACILITIES

Authority and Scope

City Council shall reserve to itself the authority to determine the name of major public facilities. This policy shall govern the naming of major City facilities, including parks, recreation facilities and other City buildings and facilities, and the renaming of such facilities and streets. This policy shall not apply to the naming of streets, which under the City Code is the responsibility of the Planning Commission.

The Alexandria School Board will name the new public schools in the City of Alexandria and City Council will be represented on the Naming Subcommittee established by the School Board.

Naming Process

The naming process shall involve the Council and the public and shall be coordinated by a three-member standing committee (the "City Council Facilities Naming Committee") consisting of ~~the Mayor, who shall serve as chair, one other Council Member,~~ two Council Members appointed by Council for a three-year term at the installation meeting at the beginning of Council's term of office and the City Manager or the Manager's designee. The naming process shall consist of a three-step process as follows:

Step 1: At such time as City Council approves the inclusion of a new major facility within the six-year Capital Improvement Program or any time thereafter, the City Council Facilities Naming Committee will convene at the call of the Committee Chair to review a facility or facilities for naming. The City Council, City Boards and Commissions and members of the public may recommend to the Committee a specific City facility for naming or renaming. The City Council Facilities Naming Committee will take such recommendations under advisement, and may decide to initiate the naming process by issuing a news release inviting Council Members, Members of Boards and Commissions, and other interested individuals to communicate either verbally or in writing, including e-mail, by a certain date the name of a person or persons deserving of being honored by the naming of the City facility. City Boards and Commissions should refrain from holding public hearings on the naming of public facilities and should instead encourage citizens to forward their naming suggestions in writing to members of the City Council Facilities Naming Committee.

Step 2: Within a reasonable period of time after initiating the naming process, the City Council Facilities Naming Committee shall consider the names offered to the Committee and may recommend to City Council a name for the facility or facilities. In its deliberations, the City

Council Facilities Naming Committee will be guided by a set of naming guidelines.

Step 3: The City Council Facilities Naming Committee's recommendation shall be forwarded in writing to City Council and shall be docketed for City Council consideration. Upon Council's approval of a name for the facility, the City Manger shall direct staff to prepare a suitable plaque to be affixed to the facility and other appropriate arrangements to implement Council's action and to commemorate publicly the contributions of the person or persons for whom the facility is named.

Naming Guidelines

In considering appropriate names for a major City facility, the City Council Facilities Naming Committee shall be guided by the following guidelines:

1. Preferred names include: persons, living or deceased, who have made a significant contribution to the City in terms of public service, involvement in civic or cultural activities over an extended period of time, or significant financial investment, and whose contribution(s) may be related to the facility being named.
2. Appropriate names also include: places or events in history that are related to the facility or its location, particularly when the facility is related to historic preservation.
3. The renaming of existing major facilities shall not be encouraged and shall only be considered with good and sufficient cause.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

13
1-27-04

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 21, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST TO REFER TO THE CITY COUNCIL NAMING COMMITTEE THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF THE NAME OF THE ALEXANDRIA BLACK HISTORY RESOURCE CENTER TO THE ALEXANDRIA BLACK HISTORY MUSEUM

ISSUE: Consideration of a Request to Refer to the City Council Naming Committee the Proposed Change of the Name of the Alexandria Black History Resource Center to the Alexandria Black History Museum.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council refer the proposal to change the name of the Alexandria Black History Resource Center to the Alexandria Black History Museum to the City Naming Committee for consideration and submission of a recommendation to Council.

DISCUSSION: Since its inception in 1983, the City facility located at 638 North Alfred Street has been called the Alexandria Black History Resource Center. The use of the term "resource center" no longer appropriately describe the activities that take place at this institution, which collects, preserves, and interprets the history of the African American community in Alexandria and Northern Virginia. In a short while the Alexandria Black History Resource Center will be seeking accreditation from the American Association of Museums. The use of the term "museum" within the title of the institution more accurately depicts what the institution is all about.

Many residents, friends groups of the institution, members of City boards and commissions and other Black History organizations support the change of the name from Resource Center to Museum. Letters of support are attached.

Under the policy for naming City buildings, name changes like this are to be considered by the Naming Committee. Thus, I recommend that the proposed name change be referred to the committee for consideration and submission of a recommendation to Council.

ATTACHMENT: Letters of support for the name change.

STAFF:

Jean Taylor Federico, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria

Louis Hicks, Director, Alexandria Black History Resource Center

Lillian Paterson, Museum Aide, Alexandria Black History Resource Center

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 18, 2003

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: REPORT ON THE NAMING COMMITTEE'S DISCUSSION OF TWO RECENT PROPOSALS

ISSUE: Consideration of report on the Naming Committee's discussion of two recent proposals.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive the report.

DISCUSSION: The Naming Committee, consisting of Councilwoman Del Pepper, Councilman David Speck and myself, met on June 3. We were joined by Jean Federico, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria. At Council's request, we considered two items: the re-naming of Waterfront Park in honor of Colonel John Fitzgerald, and the desire of the family of Clinton Knight to recognize his role in the saving of Gadsby's Tavern.

Under the current Policy on Naming City Facilities, if the Naming Committee believes the re-naming of a facility may be warranted, it is to seek proposals of new names from the public. After receiving and considering the proposals, it may make a recommendation to City Council.

The Committee believed the request to honor the accomplishments of Colonel John Fitzgerald to be of some interest. But it felt that the name of Founders Park, another City park on the waterfront, already honors the early town trustees and founders. While Colonel Fitzgerald's period of significance is somewhat later, the Committee believed that his and others' contributions might be treated as part of a unified sign system, now being considered, for City parks located on the waterfront. These proposed Alexandria Heritage Trail signs, if approved, could be implemented in some of the City's waterfront parks within the next year or so. Staff is currently reviewing the potential for these signs to address not only some of the City founders, but also to recognize the first group of mayors who led the town of Alexandria at the end of the 18th century. The Committee believed an appropriate recognition of Colonel Fitzgerald could be provided in the new waterfront signage that may be placed in Founders Park. It also should be noted that there is already a "Fitzgerald Lane," which is located off Martha Custis Drive and Gunston Road.

At the time of the meeting, members of the committee did not have sufficient information about the contributions of Clinton Knight to Gadsby's Tavern. Since the meeting, Jean Federico has done additional research and has found that Mr. Knight was, indeed, a critical player in the preservation of Gadsby's Tavern. Based on this information, staff will, over the summer, consider alternate opportunities to recognize Mr. Knight either in the Tavern or the Legion building, and will bring a recommendation to the Naming Committee in the fall. Any recommendation from the Naming Committee with respect to Mr. Knight will then be brought forward to Council.

STAFF:

Jean Federico, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria

FRIENDS OF JOHN FITZGERALD PARK AND THE BALLYSHANERS INC.

January 22, 2004

2004 JAN 22 P 2:08

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
ALEXANDRIA, VA

Dear Phil,

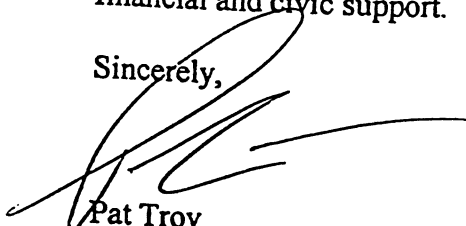
The Friends of John Fitzgerald Park and the Ballyshaners, the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, would like to ask for your support in naming Waterfront Park for Colonel John Fitzgerald. We are including two published articles by our City Historian, T. Michael Miller, which well document the tremendous contribution John Fitzgerald made to the early development of our city.

Colonel Fitzgerald, the patriot, served throughout the Revolutionary War as an aide to George Washington, served as a member of Alexandria's Committee to Ratify the Constitution, and was appointed Alexandria's Collector of Customs by Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton. Mayor Fitzgerald played a major role in our City's government, its economic development in trade and banking, as well as establishing Alexandria's first library and theater.

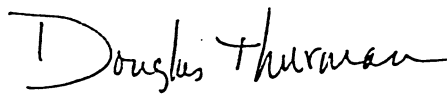
Before there was a Catholic church in Alexandria, Fitzgerald's home was used for Mass and is believed to have been the site of the first confirmation in the State of Virginia. John Fitzgerald was instrumental in raising the funds for construction of St. Mary's, Alexandria's first Catholic church. Fitzgerald's close friend, George Washington, contributed to the building of St. Mary's, and Fitzgerald was so successful that he was asked to raise money for the establishment of Georgetown University.

Along the waterfront, Fitzgerald and others reclaimed mudflats enlarging our city, and developing Alexandria into one of the foremost seaports of the 18th Century. From Fitzgerald's warehouse, better known as the Seaport Inn, one can look out onto Waterfront Park. Honoring Fitzgerald will daily remind our citizens and those who visit, of the Irish contribution to our city. The Friends of John Fitzgerald Park, in conjunction with the Department of Parks and Recreation, will proudly adopt the park, and provide financial and civic support.

Sincerely,



Pat Troy
Chairman



Douglas Thurman
Co-Chairman

and St. Patrick's Day in 17th & 18th Century Alexandria, Virginia

For the past 250 years, the Irish have played a significant role in the history of Alexandria, Virginia. In the 18th century, the city's most notable man was the agreeable, broad-shouldered Colonel John Fitzgerald, for-aid-de-camp to General George Washington. Fitzgerald (d. 1799) served as president and one of the founding factors of the Potomac Company - an enterprise established in 1785 to improve navigability of the Potomac River for cultural commodity shipping to Georgetown and Alexandria. Fitzgerald was also among those Georgetown and Alexandria merchants who signed a political broadside which called for the creation of a new federal capital on the banks of the Potomac River. In the political scene, Fitzgerald served as Alderman, sat on the Alexandria City Council, and was chosen to fill out the mayoral term of David Williams, who resigned in June 1786. During Fitzgerald's six month tenure as mayor, a petition was drafted and forwarded to the Virginia General Assembly which called for the construction of a new tobacco warehouse in the southern part of town in September, 1786. This warehouse would be a major factor in the success of Alexandria as a seaport. Following his mayoral term, Fitzgerald was appointed to positions of civic responsibility. In 1788 he was a member of the Alexandria Committee to ratify

the U.S. Constitution, and in 1793 was nominated the U.S. Collector of Customs by U.S. Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, whose official correspondence with Fitzgerald documents the importance of Alexandria as a major seaport during this era.

In 1792, Fitzgerald, along with other merchants, founded the Bank of Alexandria, the oldest bank in Virginia and perhaps the oldest financial institution south of the Potomac River. The bank still stands today as residential apartments at the southeast corner of N. Fairfax and Cameron Streets. A patron of literature and the theater, Fitzgerald also assisted in the establishment of the Alexandria Library in 1794 and contributed \$200 to the construction of a theater in 1797 on the north side of the 400 block of Cameron Street.

As a former Revolutionary War soldier, Fitzgerald also displayed an abiding interest in the militia. In 1798 he commanded two troops of Cavalry which escorted George Washington, General of the American Armies, through Alexandria during his passage north on November 5, 1798. Furthermore, in the 1790s when American ports were imperiled by French and British privateers, it was Fitzgerald who played a conspicuous role in securing the safety of Alexandria by overseeing the construction of a fort at Jones Point.

Fitzgerald, although well known in Alexandria's history, was not the



As a former
Revolutionary
War soldier,
Fitzgerald also
displayed an
abiding interest
in the militia.

to procure employment, financial assistance, and insure proper interment for deceased Irish immigrants.

Hibernians held quarterly meetings yearly until the outbreak of the Civil War. The highlight of their activities was the annual gala celebration of St. Patrick's Day on March 17th. The Alexandria Gazette described these festivities in March 26, 1836:

At an early hour of the day, the Hibernian Society met, and having made their arrangements, walked in procession

only Irishman to contribute to the city. In fact, the Irish contingency was vocal enough in 1824 to form a Hibernian Society to promote Irish heritage and to aid destitute Irish immigrants. Among the Society's goals were

from the room over the Hydraulions (fire-house) down Royal Street, each of the members bearing on his breast, one of the badges which had been made for the occasion by some of the ladies of Alexandria, which badges were of green ribbon, having represented on them in motto, Erin Go Bragh. They were, in a word, an ornament to the wearers, and a fair specimen of the taste of the ladies who made them. The beautiful Flag of the Society was borne in front of the Procession by three young Irishmen, its graceful folds waving in the breeze and saluted by the sun which had burst through the clouds and seemed emblematic of the light that is shedding its benign influence over the Emerald Islanda plentiful repast had been prepared by the order of the Committee of Arrangements and all present, after enjoying the feast of reason and the flow of soul, parted in harmony and good feeling, praying only to meet another on Ireland's having obtained her long expected emancipation.

After dinner, patriotic songs were sung and many toasts were drunk to American institutions and Irish patriots. One such toast was issued by Judge Neale at a dinner held in the City Hotel (now known as Gadsby's Tavern) in 1852: The Emerald Isle whose landscape is adorned with the richest beauties of indulgent Heaven; although down-trodden, yet are her noble sons surpassed by none, and equaled by few, for generosity, moral courage and devoted patriotism.

"St. Patrick's Day -- The Wearing of the Green

in Alexandria, Virginia"

by T. Michael Miller

For the past 250 years, the Irish have played a significant role in the annals of Alexandria, Virginia. During the 18th century, the city's most notable Irishman was the agreeable, broad shouldered Colonel John Fitzgerald, former aide-de-camp to General George Washington and the town's foremost Roman Catholic layman. Fitzgerald not only served as president of the Potomac Company from 1793-1796 but was a founding director of this enterprise in 1785. Established to improve the navigability of the Potomac River, the Company constructed a canal around the Virginia side of the Great Falls, thus expediting the transshipment of agricultural produce to Georgetown and Alexandria. In 1785, Fitzgerald was also among those Georgetown and Alexandria merchants who signed a political broadside which called for the creation of a new federal capital on the banks of the Potomac River.

On the political scene, Colonel Fitzgerald served on the Alexandria City Council and was elected an Alderman in 1787. He was chosen in June 1786, to fill out the mayoral term of David Arell, who resigned. During Fitzgerald's six month tenure as mayor, petitions were drafted and forward to the Virginia General Assembly which addressed the erection of scales in the city for the weighing of hay [October 16, 1786]; another called for the construction of a new tobacco warehouse in the southern part of town [November 15, 1786].

Following his mayoral term, Fitzgerald was appointed to numerous positions of civic responsibility. In 1788, he was a member of the Alexandria Committee to ratify the U.S. Constitution and in 1793, was appointed U.S. Collector of Customs by Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton. Official correspondence between Hamilton and Fitzgerald document the importance of Alexandria as a major seaport during this era.

In 1792, John Fitzgerald along with other merchants founded the Bank of Alexandria, the oldest bank in Virginia and one of the oldest financial institutions south of the Potomac River. A patron of literature and the theater, Colonel Fitzgerald was an early founder of the Alexandria Library in 1794 and subsequently contributed in 1797, \$200 toward the construction of the town's first permanent theater building on the north side of the 400 block of Cameron Street.

As a former Revolutionary War soldier, Colonel Fitzgerald also displayed an avid interest in the militia. In 1798, he commanded two troops of Cavalry which escorted George Washington, General of the American Armies, through Alexandria during his passage north on

November 5, 1798. Furthermore, in the 1790s when American ports were imperiled by French and British privateers, it was Fitzgerald who played a conspicuous role in having Alexandria fortified by overseeing the construction of a fort at Jones Point. Fitzgerald was also present at Washington's last military review in Alexandria on the 4th of July 1799.

Having been in poor health for a number of years, Colonel Fitzgerald died in December 1799,

He was interred beside his wife at Warburton Manor, the former estate of John Digges, Fitzgerald's father-in-law in Prince George's County, Maryland.

Colonel Fitzgerald was not the sole Irishman who contributed to the social and political fabric of 18th century Alexandria. Other notable figures were banker and mayor William Herbert; merchants Michael Madden, Jesse Taylor, grocer Guy Atkinson and attorney Robert J. Taylor.

IN 1824, a Hibernian Society was organized in Alexandria to aid destitute Irish immigrants and to promote cultural identity. Writing on March 27, 1824, a society member informed the editor of the Alexandria Gazette that "through the medium of the paper, he wished to call upon every Irishman, who loves his country, to come forward and give his name and his assistance to this infant Society...It was the duty of the Society to procure aid or employment for immigrants; to attend to their necessities; to visit them in their sickness; to manage and superintend their little effects; to have the departed interred in a Christian manner. I hope there will not be an Irishman in Alexandria who will disgrace his name by not joining us." Hibernian Society members first met in June 1824, at the "Town Hall" on Market Square and later elected James C. Barry, secretary. In March 1825, following the assembly at "Town Hall," the society moved in procession to St. Mary's Church where the Reverend J.W. Fairclough performed divine service.

At an election of Hibernian Society officers in 1826, Dr. Samuel Carson of Armaugh County Ireland was chosen president; Dr. John Richards, vice-president; Matthew Robinson, treasurer, and James C. Barry, secretary. John A. Stewart, James Douglass, Guy Atkinson, George Coleman, and William Dunlap were elected managers. In 1827, the Marine Band joined in the celebration as the Hibernians marched in procession to St. Mary's Church.

Hibernians held yearly quarterly meetings until the outbreak of the Civil War. The highlight of these gatherings was always the gala celebration of St. Patrick's day on March 17. The Alexandria Gazette of March 26, 1836, described the scene as follows:

At an early hour of the day, the Hibernian Society met, and having made their arrangements, walked in procession from the room over the Hydraulions, a (firehouses) down

Royal Street, each of the members bearing on his breast, one of the badges which had been made for the occasion by some of the ladies of Alexandria, which badges were of green ribbon, having represented on them in motto, "Erin go bragh." They were, in a word, an ornament to the wearers, and a fair specimen of the taste of the ladies who made them. The beautiful Flag of the Society was borne in front of the Procession by three young Irishmen, its graceful folds waving in the breeze and saluted by the sun which had burst through the clouds and seemed emblematic of the light that is shedding its benign influence over the Emerald Island. On their arrival at St. Mary's Church, the choir sung a hymn set to the music of Gramarchree, Mr. Davis, the organist playing in his usual fine style. After which, the Rev. John Smith delivered an address, remarkable for its eloquence and historical information. When he had finished, the Organ again pealed forth the merry notes of "Patrick's Day," and the procession returned to the room from whence they came. During their absence a plentiful repast had been prepared by the order of the Committee of Arrangements and all present, after enjoying the "feast of reason and the flow of soul," parted in harmony and good feeling, praying only to meet another on Ireland's having obtained her long expected emancipation.

After dinner, patriotic songs were sung and many toasts were drunk to Irish patriots and American institutions. Typical, was a toast offered by Judge Christopher Neale following a dinner held at the City Hotel (Gadsby's) in 1852: "By Judge Neale -- The Emerald Isle whose landscape is adorned with the richest beauties of indulgent Heaven; although down-trodden, yet are her noble sons surpassed by none, and equalled by few, for generosity, moral courage and devoted patriotism. ..." Another Irish patriot, George Washington Parke Custis, Martha Washington's grandson, was frequently called upon to orate at St. Patrick's Day festivities.

As Alexandria prospered during the mid-19th century, the Irish loomed large in the construction of the Alexandria Canal and local railroads.

Upon the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Alexandria mustered 800 plus men who subsequently joined the Confederacy in defence of Virginia. Among these warriors were two companies of Alexandria Irishmen who formed the O'Connell and Emmett Guards, a component of the 17th Virginia Regiment.

Following the conflict, St. Patrick Day was once again celebrated in old Alexandria. Banquets were held at Serepta Hall and the Young Men's Sodality Lyceum across from the Catholic Rectory on the 300 block of Duke Street. On St. Patrick's Day in 1899, it was reported the Catholic Lyceum hall "had been opened early in the night, and the many friends of the Hibernian Order,

including a large number of ladies, visited ... where the tables were decorated with United States flags and the Irish banner..."

It was also a custom for some and disgust for others that on St. Patrick's Day in Alexandria pranksters hanged effigies of stuffed straw "Paddies" on street corners. Although police officials tried to curtail these activities, in March 1896, "several effigies were seen by early risers in various parts of the city. One was suspended from the telephone pole at the east end of the Wilkes Street tunnel and another was at the intersection of Cameron and Royal Streets. One was placed on a fence in the western part of the city with its back to the sidewalk. ...The effigy at the corner of Cameron and Royal Streets was taken to the Station house by some officers, amid cries of "turn him in" by the bystanders." [AG: 3/17/1896]

Today, St. Patrick's day is a time for parades, music and good cheer as Irish Americans celebrate their distinguished heritage and recall the "Douglas's, Sheehy's, Murphy's McLaughlin's and O'Leary's of yesteryear.

Clinton Knight and GW

BY KATHLEEN BENSON

I recently received the January 29, edition of the Gazette and the story on Page 20, "Celebrating George," caught my attention, especially the line "In 1976, the present George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee was formed..."

What a shame that so much of the earlier history seems to be forgotten. From the Alexandria Gazette dated Tuesday, February 12, 1963, [Page 1]: "You've Changed, George." That was Mrs. F. Clinton Knight's quip as she compared her husband with the Washington portrait above the mantel in the main hall at Gadsby's Tavern, a place with which the lives of the two "Georges" have been closely bound. Gadsby's was a favorite haunt of Washington in its earliest days — Clint Knight was a principal figure in its restoration by the post, aided by other patriotic groups, and its preservation as one of Northern Virginia's most eminent historic shrines. It is now maintained as its home and a landmark of history by Alexandria Post 24, American Legion.

"Mr. and Mrs. Knight were appearing in costumes of Washington's day in Sunday's rehearsal for phases of pageantry in the annual Birthnight Ball which the post sponsors each Feb. 22, as one of the most colorful Northern Virginia social events each year..."

FROM THE Alexandria Gazette dated Saturday, Nov. 13, 1965, [Page 1]: "Oil Portrait, Plaque in Gadsby's to Honor Late City Resident." An oil portrait of the late civic, business and American Legion leader F. Clinton Knight will be hung in Gadsby's Tavern Great Hall, and a memorial plaque will be placed in the Legion meeting room of the historic building, a special committee of Alexandria Post 24 has announced...

"Mr. Knight, a native Alexandrian, was in the hardware business on King Street, with the firm of R.E. Knight and Sons, for more than half a century.

"A two-term member of City Council, he was postmaster of Alexandria from 1922 to 1934. Mr. Knight was a commander of Legion Post 24, departmental commander of Virginia, national executiveman from Virginia to the na-

tional Legion organization and national vice-chairman of the Legion Rehabilitation Committee...

"Mr. Knight was an active campaigner for Alexandria redevelopment, and was a member of the committee that originally purchased Gadsby's Tavern. He was a member of the Tavern Restoration Committee and was president of Gadsby's Tavern and City Hotel for many years..."

I DOUBT THAT many in Alexandria remember Clinton Knight's name; unfortunately, there is no school, library, park or parkway named in his honor, and as Bill McNamara wrote long ago...

"...Only a few of our current members had the privilege of knowing him and many probably wonder why his portrait hangs at the east end of the ballroom. In summary, he was Mr. Legionnaire.

"He was affectionately called by all The Kingfish. Space precludes listing all of his contributions, but here are a few: He and his WW1 comrades stepped in at the last moment, brought the Gadsby's complex and saved it from the wrecker's hammer.

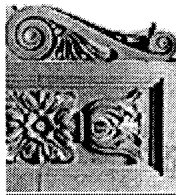
"They dug out the basement by hand and created our present club. During the Great Depression, he and four colleagues mortgaged their own homes to pay the monthly mortgage payments and save Gadsby's for the Legion. The Legion and Post 24 were two of the most important things in his life. I wonder just how many of today's Post members have that kind of dedication."

And he did all of this while raising six children in a loving home on Park Road.

WITHOUT CLINTON KNIGHT, there would more than likely be no Gadsby's Tavern in which to hold the Ball. I'd like those who pass through Gadsby's during the George Washington celebratory month to know something about the man whose portrait hangs on the wall so that they might have a greater appreciation that the Tavern exists for them to enjoy.

Clinton Knight died on June 24, 1965. He rests with his wife, Evelyn, in the Alexandria National Cemetery.

Kathleen Benson is the granddaughter of the Knights and was born and raised in Alexandria and now resides in Nokesville, VA.

**Randy Sengel**

06/22/2004 11:22 AM

To: ""William Euille" <wmeuille@wdeuille.com>, ""Del Pepper" <delperpepper@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <rob@krupicka.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>, <paulcsmedberg@aol.com>, ""Joyce Woodson" <council@joycewoodson.net>, Phil Sunderland/Alex@Alex
cc: Jackie Henderson/Alex@Alex
Subject: Docket Item 27, June 22, 2004

This morning I read the manager's memorandum to City Council regarding the report of the Naming Committee on various proposals, which is to be considered at this evening's council meeting as docket item number 27. I would respectfully offer a few brief observations regarding the proposal to name the skate park after Schuyler Jones. I know that a portion of the letter I wrote in support of this proposal is included in an attachment to the manager's memorandum, and I hope not to be redundant here.

I agree that the circumstances of this proposal do not readily conform to the criteria set forth in the naming policy guidelines. Under these guidelines, it would probably be difficult to find any 16 year old who made a "significant contribution to the City in terms of public service, involvement in civic or cultural activities over an extended period of time, or significant financial investment." That having been said, I would also note that one of the hallmarks of government in this City has always been the willingness of its leaders, including the present manager and all the members of this present Council, to move beyond constraints imposed by guidelines in appropriate circumstances, should it be determined that to do so serves the public interest.

I have said many times in the course of this case that I believe it is important that young people in this community see some tangible evidence that their adult counterparts understand and validate the manner in which Schuyler Jones acted when he refused to engage in violence when he was attacked by others. It seems to me that the naming of this facility in honor of Schuyler would be a perfect opportunity to help in conveying this important message, and be consistent with the public interest. Thank you for your consideration.

Randy Sengel

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 2, 2004

TO: COUNCILMAN ANDREW H. MACDONALD

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: NEW NAMES FOR THE SKATEBOARD PARK AND WATERFRONT PARK

I am responding to your January 15 memorandum to the Naming Committee regarding the naming of the City's skatepark and the re-naming of Waterfront Park.

The naming of the skatepark for Schulyer Jones was referred to the Naming Committee by City Council on October 18, 2003. Since then Council has received a number of letters and petitions endorsing the naming of the park after Mr. Jones. At its January 21 meeting, the Naming Committee discussed this naming request and continued consideration of this matter to a future meeting. We will notify Council when the Committee has reached a conclusion.

In June 2003, the last Council received the Naming Committee's recommendations on the re-naming of Waterfront Park after Colonel John Fitzgerald. While the Committee found the proposal to honor Colonel Fitzgerald was a matter of interest, it recommended against renaming the park and indicated that the new Alexandria Heritage Trail signs had the potential for highlighting Colonel Fitzgerald's contributions. Staff looked into this further over the summer.

At its January 21 meeting, the Naming Committee discussed this proposal again and noted that none of the major City parks along the waterfront (Oronoco Bay, Founders, Waterfront and Windmill Hill Parks) was named after an individual. The Committee is continuing to look for a way to honor Colonel Fitzgerald and will discuss this matter again at a future meeting.

cc: The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council
Michele Evans, Assistant City Manager



Andrew H. Macdonald, Ph.D.
Councilman

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

MANAGER'S OFFICE
ALEXANDRIA, VA

2004 JAN 20 A 11: 57



Tree City USA

City Hall (703) 838-4500
Studio (703) 548-7572
macdonaldcouncil@msn.com

January 15, 2004

TO: The "Naming Committee," Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Councilman Andrew H. Macdonald

Re: New Names for the Skateboard Park and Waterfront Park

Dear Mr. Sunderland:

I urge you and the other members of the Naming Committee to recognize two Alexandrians for their contributions to the community. One lived in Alexandria when it was a thriving colonial seaport; the other attended T.C Williams HS some 200 years after the founding of St. Mary's Church.

Schulyer Jones Skateboard Park: Schuyler Jones, who attended T.C. Williams High School, was an avid skateboarder and rower. Mr. Jones' death last year in Market Square was particularly senseless in light of his gentle nature and character. His friends have expressed their strong support for this nomination.

Col. John Fitzgerald Park: Col. Fitzgerald was a close friend of our first President, a soldier, a founding member of St. Mary's Catholic Church and a waterfront businessman. He was Gen. George Washington's aide to camp during the American Revolution. In A Seaport Saga: A Portrait of old Alexandria, Virginia by William Smith and T. Michael Milier he is described as the "foremost Roman Catholic layman in Alexandria." In 1796, he helped establish St. Mary's Church, the oldest Roman Catholic parish in Virginia. Some of the oldest headstones in the Catholic Cemetery on South Washington Street bare the names of early Irish immigrants.

Fitzgerald also owned the warehouses at King and Union, that later housed the Seaport Inn (now, alas, a Starbucks). One of the City's oldest brick and stone warehouses, it is adjacent to what is presently called Waterfront Park. This delightful park is not readily identifiable, and is often overlooked because of its lackluster name. I don't think that we have done much to recognize Alexandria's Irish immigrants either; this might be one way to do so.



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314




Tree City USA

Andrew H. Macdonald, Ph.D.
Councilman

City Hall (703) 838-4500
Studio (703) 548-7572
macdonaldcouncil@msn.com

IT is my understanding, that the Naming Committee reviews all such requests and then forwards its recommendations to City Council for final approval. I believe that these two parks should be renamed this spring in memory of these two special Alexandrians.

Respectfully, 

Andrew H. Macdonald
Councilman
703-548-7572

CC: Old Town Civic Association
Waterfront Alliance
Waterfront Committee
Seminary Hills Assoc.
Taylor Run Civic Assoc.
Clover Park Civic
Mr. Jack Taylor
Mr. Pat Troy
Tom Raycroft, Aide to Councilman Macdonald