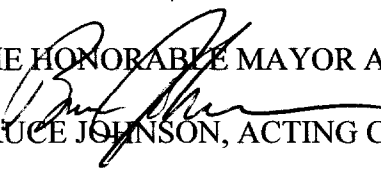


## City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 6, 2011

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:**  BRUCE JOHNSON, ACTING CITY MANAGER

**SUBJECT:** RECEIPT OF RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CITY COUNCIL NAMING COMMITTEE ON THE PROPOSAL TO NAME THE PUBLIC ALLEY BEHIND 804 DUKE STREET IN HONOR OF THE LATE DOUGLAS THURMAN AND SETTING THE PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of proposal to name the public alley behind 804 Duke Street in honor of the late Douglas Thurman and setting the proposal for public hearing and consideration on Saturday, September 17.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council: (1) receive the recommendation of the City Council Naming Committee to name the alley located behind 804 Duke Street in honor of the late Douglas Thurman; (2) set the proposal for public hearing and consideration on Saturday, September 17; and (3) following the public hearing, approve the alley naming as recommended by the City Council Naming Committee.

**DISCUSSION:** On February 4, the City received a letter from the Old Town Civic Association (Attachment 1), requesting that the City consider naming the public alley behind 804 Duke Street in honor of the late Douglas L. Thurman. Mr. Thurman's residence was at 804 Duke Street before his death in January 2011.

Douglas Lee Thurman was an active and tireless advocate for Alexandria, dedicated to preserving the historic character and resources of the community, as well as enhancing the quality of life for all residents and visitors to the City. Douglas Thurman worked at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. for many years, and had retired just a few years before his death at the age of 60 on January 10, 2011. Over his many years of service to Alexandria, he had acted in a leadership role as President of the Alexandria Historical Society and as a Board member and Vice President of the Old Town Civic Association. He also served as a member or volunteer of numerous organizations in the City including the Alexandria Convention and Visitor's Association, the Alexandria League of Women Voters, Alexandria Republican City Committee, Friends of Carlyle House, the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, Living Legends of Alexandria, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church. At St. Paul's, one of his most noticeable contributions was to help establish the church's head-start program for underprivileged children. In 2008, he initiated the effort to name "Hummer Alley" between Columbus and S. Alfred

Streets in recognition of Police Sgt. Elton Hummer, killed nearby in the line of duty by a still unknown assailant in 1928.

In response to the proposal from the Old Town Civic Association, as well as correspondence from City residents (Attachment 2), the City Council Naming Committee (Councilman Frank Fannon, Councilwoman Del Pepper and Acting City Manager Bruce Johnson) held a meeting on July 27, 2011, to discuss the naming proposal. The City Council Naming Committee voted unanimously to recommend to City Council that the public alley behind 804 Duke Street be named Douglas Thurman Alley.

I recommend that Council schedule this proposal for public hearing and consideration at its Saturday, September 17 public hearing meeting.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: February 4, 2011 Letter from Old Town Civic Association

Attachment 2: Correspondence from Alexandria Residents Laura and David Lantzy

Attachment 3: Excerpt from Old Town Crier

Attachment 4: Excerpt from Alexandria Gazette Packet

**STAFF:**

Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager

Lance Mallamo, Director- Office of Historic Alexandria



*Old Town Civic Association*  
P.O.Box 1213  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313

February 4, 2011

The Honorable Redella S. "Del" Pepper  
The Honorable Frank H. Fannon IV  
The Honorable James K. Hartmann  
City of Alexandria  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: Douglas Thurman Alley

Dear Councilmembers Pepper and Fannon and Manager Hartmann:

The Old Town Civic Association respectfully petitions you to recommend that the City of Alexandria name the alley behind the home of the late Douglas L. Thurman at 804 Duke Street the "Douglas Thurman Alley". We understand that the alley is a public way and that it is not now named. This petition is submitted as authorized by the unanimous vote of our Board of Directors at its January 27, 2011 meeting.

Douglas Thurman's decades of extraordinary dedication to the City of Alexandria, to its historic and civic institutions, and to its people exemplified the highest ideals of citizen service. Doug served Old Town Civic Association for many years, as a member, as a Director, and as its representative to the board of the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, culminating with the conclusion of his term as OTCA's Vice President in June 2010. He was a founding board member of Living Legends of Alexandria, celebrating the lifetime contributions of leading Alexandrians to the welfare of their city—but modestly declining to be so honored himself. He was a long-time board member of the Alexandria Historical Society, and served as its President. He was a dedicated and tireless board member of the Friends of Carlyle House Historic Park and, by Council's appointment, of the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission. He was an active advocate for broad and energetic citizen participation in the public affairs of our City, serving in the campaigns of candidates for public office and as a board member of the League of Women Voters.

Doug contributed not only his time but his energy and his financial support to these and other community institutions, such as the Athenaeum, the Lyceum, and the Ballyshaners. As a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, he was instrumental in the successful effort to initiate a Head Start program under the Church's auspices to serve Alexandria children.

Honoring Doug Thurman in this way would be especially fitting given his leading role in advocating for the City's having named another nearby alley in honor of Sgt. Elton Hummer, the only Alexandria police officer who died in the line of duty whose murder has never been solved.

Douglas Thurman immeasurably enriched the lives of countless Alexandrians through his selfless efforts on behalf of the city he loved. Just as his service honored all of his fellow citizens, the Old Town Civic Association urges that the City honor him by naming the "Douglas Thurman Alley".

Thank you for your own dedicated service to Alexandria, and for your consideration of this petition.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J Gosling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

OLD TOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.  
John Gosling, President

bcc: Michael Hobbs

**From:** Michele Evans  
**Sent:** Monday, August 22, 2011 12:52 PM  
**To:** Christopher Bedwell  
**Subject:** FW: Council item September 17th

Include as an attachment on docket item

**From:** The Lantzy's  
**Sent:** Monday, August 22, 2011 12:25 PM  
**To:** Kerry Donley; Del Pepper; Paul Smedberg; Rob Krupicka; William Euille; Frank Fannon; Alicia Hughes  
**Cc:** Michele Evans; Michael Hobbs; Kristin Kilgore;  
**Subject:** Council item September 17th

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of Council:

We would like to add our names to the members of the community who are requesting the naming of the alley behind the former home of Doug Thurman on the 800 block of Duke Street as "Thurman Alley."

Doug was a tireless advocate for the community, and we both miss him very much. We hope you will consent to this small gesture of appreciation for his many, many efforts toward the betterment of Alexandria.

Sincerely,  
Laura and David Lantzy



*The Old Town Crier*  
The Monthly Newsletter of the Old Town Civic Association, Inc.

**Remembering Douglas Thurman**

In memory of Doug, the OTCA Board has voted to join Old Town neighbors and friends, who before he died, had begun petitioning the City Council's "Naming Committee" to name the alley behind his home on the 800 block of Duke Street as "Thurman Alley". The alley is a public way, and is presently unnamed.

Doug was, as many of you know, a longtime resident of Alexandria and has contributed greatly with his energy and financial support to many causes that keep this city vibrant and meaningful to its residents. He was an active and dedicated member of OTCA for many years, serving ultimately as a Board member and as Vice President until the conclusion of his term last June. His service to other causes and organizations in Old Town was legendary:

Alexandria Historical Society, Carlyle House, Lee-Fendall House, the Lyceum, the Athenaeum, St. Paul's Church, the League of Women Voters, the Ballyshaners, and more.

Petitions of this type are more favorably received when they come from individuals or an organization such as OTCA which knew particularly of Doug's contribution to the community.

If you wish to add your voice to this petition contact the Naming Committee which presently consists of Councilman Frank Fannon, Councilwoman Del Pepper, and City Manager Jim Hartmann.



## A Quiet Force

Doug Thurman worked behind the scenes in city politics and historic preservation.

By Michael Lee Pope

Thursday, January 27, 2011

SHARE

Doug Thurman, a tireless advocate for Republican politics in Alexandria and historic preservation in Old Town, died of lung cancer earlier this month. He was 60.

"It's a great loss to the city," said Republican Councilman Frank Fannon. "Doug didn't have a family, so he was able to devote himself to making this city a better place for everyone."

Never one to seek the spotlight, Thurman preferred to work behind the scenes and let others take credit. This was true whether he was running Irish restaurateur Pat Troy's political campaigns or working to name an alley after a slain police officer. Friends and associates say he had a relentless political drive and indefatigable love of Alexandria's history, but rarely shared personal information about himself — even with people who knew him well for many years.

"He was the most secretive person I've ever known," said Sammye Collins, who dated Thurman from April 2007 to February 2009. "But he was also the kind of person who really went overboard to help other people."

Thurman served as president of the Alexandria Historical Society, and he served on the boards of Old Town Civic Association, the League of Women Voters, Friends of the Carlyle House and the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission. He was also an original member of the board of directors for Living Legends, a nonprofit organization that honors Alexandrians who have made significant contributions to the city — an honor he declined last year.

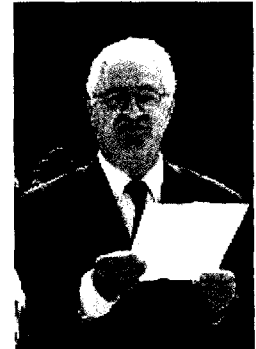
"He was erudite and hard working, but also very unassuming," said Mary Anne Weber, who served with him on the Living Legends board. "So it doesn't surprise me that he would have rejected the attention."

**DOUGLAS LEE THURMAN** was born in Richmond on March 22, 1950. As a newborn baby, he was adopted by Nebraska natives Dale and Helen Thurman, who moved to Arlington during World War II to become government workers. After graduating from Roanoke College in the early 1970s, Thurman got a job at the National Archives — thanks to the help of an uncle who worked in the General Services Administration.

Fresh out of college, Thurman began his career at the National Archives preserving audiovisual materials. Before long, he worked his way into the office that oversees presidential records, where he stayed for the rest of his career. Thurman was married briefly in the 1970s, but the union ended in divorce after two years. Thurman lived most of his life as a bachelor and never had any children, which left his schedule free to advocate for causes he believed in and political candidates he supported.

"He was a very hard worker, always out knocking on doors," said Troy, whose two campaigns for Alexandria City Council were managed by Thurman. "He was the kind of guy who seemed to be everywhere and know everything."

Many times, the work that he did went unrecognized — usually because Thurman worked behind the scenes to make sure he avoided the spotlight. A good example of



Louise Krafft/Gazette Packet

**Doug Thurman participates in a wreath-laying ceremony to name Hummer Alley in honor of Alexandria Police Sgt. Elton Hummer, who was killed in the line of duty in 1928.**

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this is the naming of Hummer Alley in honor of slain Alexandria police Sgt. Elton Hummer in 2008, a campaign that Thurman began and worked quietly behind the scenes to make happen. By the time the signs went up officially designating the alley, which was near his home on Duke Street, Thurman tried to shift the focus away from him and toward the slain police officer — the only Alexandria cop who died in the line of duty whose murder has never been solved.

"I was stunned because the Hummer family lived next door to where I lived," said Thurman in a 2008 interview. "This is the type of thing people should remember because these guys are risking their lives every day of the year."

**THOSE WHO KNEW** him say that he would often quietly donate money to favored causes and volunteer when help was needed. He would also use his connections in Washington to help people find jobs, following in the tradition of his uncle who helped him back in the 1970s. Friends say Thurman was fiercely loyal to Alexandria, making a habit of shopping and dining almost exclusively in the city. And when he got involved with an organization, he was always trying to think of ways to improve it.

"He made sure we always had pipes and drums at all of our events thanks to Doug's generosity," said Sarah Coster, assistant historic site administrator at the Carlyle House Historic Park. "And he was always so gracious and humble about it."

Thurman was among those who tried to shut down the coal-fired power plant owned by Mirant on the waterfront, and he also was part of a group that unsuccessfully tried to save a building on Upper King Street that was later demolished to make room for the new Lorien Hotel. When St. Paul's Episcopal Church tried to encapsulate a historic exterior wall to build a handicapped accessible ramp and protect several stained glass windows, Thurman was among those who spoke out against the proposal during a June 2006 public hearing at City Hall.

"Looking back on it, clearly the hand of God was at work," said the Rev. Oran Warder during Thurman's funeral homily. "For our conversation, which began on that day, only broadened and deepened, and they continued, and they never stopped. As a result, Doug became passionately involved in the life and ministry of this parish."

A former Methodist, Thurman was confirmed as an Episcopalian in 2008 at St. Paul's, where he started attending regular services on Sundays and Wednesdays. Warder said Thurman became so enthusiastic about the church hosting a Head Start program that he quietly subsidized the startup cost to make the transition easy. For those who knew him, that anecdote — shared during his funeral — is just one more example of Thurman's quiet determination.

"He was always doing whatever he could to make the city a better place without taking credit for it," said former Vice Mayor Andrew Macdonald. "He preferred to stay in the background, but in many ways that made him more effective."



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