

ORDINANCE

Whereas, During the Great Migration, James and Richard, the youngest of eight brothers and two sisters born in Alabama moved to Chicago in 1955. Since supporting their growing families was a priority, they attended McCoy Barber College. The eldest brother, Stephen Douglas Jr., along with his brother Ernest opened the first Coleman Brothers Barber Shop at 63rd and Dorchester.

Whereas, For over twenty years Stephen and Ernest skillfully managed this establishment and in September of 1963, a second location opened at 68th and Stony Island with James and Richard at the helm for an impressive 55-year tenure until their passing.

Whereas, Over the course of six decades the Coleman Brothers -Barbershop at 68th and Stony Island became an essential pillar of the community, catering to the beauty needs of men, women, and children.

Whereas, The Coleman brothers did not just become successful barbers but became integral figures in their community serving as advisors, counselors and extended family.

Whereas, James and Richard were mentors and role models for impressionable teenagers during the turbulent times of the 1960's and 1970's.

Whereas, The Coleman Brothers Barbershop was a sanctuary for all especially young men seeking a productive life where they were encouraged to attend barber college, vocational school, college or enlist in the army.

Whereas, The Coleman brothers were father figures to many African American young men in the community and often provided essential needs such as lunch money.

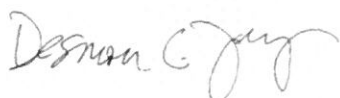
Whereas, The Coleman Brothers Barbershop served generations of southside families, professional athletes, politicians, prominent actors and actresses, teachers, ministers, business owners and professionals from all industries.

Whereas, The Coleman Brothers Barbershop partnered with Dr. Terry Mason, former Chief Operating Officer at the Cook County Department of Public Health on a program to encourage African American men to get prostate screenings.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Section 1. Pursuant to Section 2-8-040 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, which allows erection of honorary street name designations, the Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Transportation shall take the necessary action for standardization of 6800 South between Stony Island and Harper Avenue.

Section 2. This Ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication.

By: 

Alderman Desmon Yancy
Fifth Ward

James and Richard Coleman, two African-Americans, embarked on a remarkable journey when they established Coleman Brothers Barbershop in the vibrant neighborhood of southeast Woodlawn back in September 1963. Hailing from the deep south of Alabama, they migrated to Chicago during the Great Migration of 1955. With growing families to support, the enterprising Coleman Brothers opened a five-chair barbershop, complete with a shoeshine stand and manicurist desks. Over the past six decades, this barbershop has become an essential pillar of the community, catering to the beauty needs of men, women, boys, and girls alike.

James and Richard, the youngest of eight brothers and two sisters, were born in Alabama, the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement. Five of the brothers made their way to Chicago, Illinois, during a crucial period in history. In the mid-fifties, they attended McCoy Barber College, with their eldest brother, Stephen Douglas Jr., leading the charge by opening the first Coleman Brother's Barber Shop on 63rd and Dorchester. For over twenty years, Stephen and Ernest skillfully managed this establishment. Subsequently, a second location emerged on 68th and Stony Island, with James and Richard at the helm for an impressive 55-year tenure until their passing.

These brothers did not just become successful barbers; they became integral figures in their respective communities. Their barbershops acted as catalysts for growth, and beyond their skills with scissors, they served as advisors, counselors, and extended family to all residents in the area. In numerous instances, they played an active role in raising fatherless young Black boys, often providing them with much-needed school lunch money. James and Richard emerged as mentors and role models for impressionable teenagers, particularly during the turbulent times of the sixties and seventies. Amidst rising gangs, violent crime, and the influence of drug lords that plagued African-American communities, the barbershop emerged as a sanctuary for young men seeking more than the streets of Chicago could offer. The Coleman Brothers encouraged these teens to pursue vocational schools, such as barber college, or enlist in

the armed forces. Remarkably, all eight Coleman brothers served in the military, with five of them even serving together.

The customers of Coleman Brothers' Barbershop spanned generations, comprising families deeply rooted in the South side of Chicago communities. Their scissors expertly groomed the hair of individuals from diverse walks of life, including esteemed professional athletes, influential politicians, accomplished actors and actresses, dedicated doctors, passionate attorneys, and inspirational teachers. The testimonies shared during the services for both James and Richard Coleman were abundant and heartfelt, with many expressing gratitude for the brothers' unwavering support and assistance within their communities.

In light of James and Richard Coleman's lifelong commitment to the Woodlawn community, it is only fitting to honor these remarkable African-American entrepreneurs. We propose an honorary street named after them at the intersection of 68th and Stony Island—a testament to their enduring impact and invaluable contributions.



[NEWS](#) [COLUMNISTS](#) [OBITUARIES](#)

Founder of popular South Side barbershop dies

By Mary Mitchell | May 7, 2018, 9:42pm CST

SHARE



James G. Coleman, founder of Coleman Bros. Barbershop at 68th and Stony Island, has died at 88 years old. Coleman, along with his younger brother Richard Coleman, opened the South Side barbershop 56 years ago. | Provided photo

This article cost an estimated \$2,200
Your support makes it possible.

[DONATE NOW](#)

James G. Coleman, founder of Coleman Bros. Barbershop at 68th and Stony Island, has died at 88 years old.

Coleman, along with his younger brother Richard Coleman, opened the South Side barbershop 56 years ago.

Richard died two years ago.



“People from all walks of life have been in that barbershop,” said Wheeler Coleman, James Coleman’s son.

“Muhammad Ali, Elijah Muhammad, Minister Louis Farrakhan, Jesse Jackson, all kinds of politicians, lawyers and doctors as well as the common man,” he said.

OPINION

“We believe today that it is the longest-licensed barbershop in the city of Chicago,” he said, though the claim hasn’t yet been substantiated.

Coleman was part of the Great Migration that saw an estimated 6 million African-Americans pick up and leave the South in search of better opportunities.

“My dad grew up in Elba, Alabama, a one stop sign town in a family of 8 boys and one girl. His daddy was a sharecropper and also owned a funeral home and church. My father worked in the funeral home until he migrated to Chicago to seek a better life,” Wheeler Coleman said.

His father got his barber’s license in 1952 and opened up the barbershop 10 years later with his younger brother, Richard.

“Both of them were cutting hair in the same shop together for over 50 years,” Wheeler noted.

Along the way, James Coleman and his late wife, Marie Gray, had six children: Carl Coleman, Paulette Coleman, Deborah Coleman-Givens, Barbara Coleman, Wheeler Coleman and Cynthia Mitchell.

The Coleman brothers survived the riots of the ’60s by “paying protection” money so their shop wouldn’t be burned down or broken into.

They also survived the transition of the entire neighborhood.

“I’ve been going to that barbershop for over 20 years. It is your neighborhood barbershop, nothing fancy,” said Richard Steele, retired host of “The Barbershop Show,” on Wocolo and WBEZ public radio.

Even though the conversations about sports could get heated, Coleman always insisted “respect for the ladies” in the shop and cursing wasn’t allowed, Steele said.

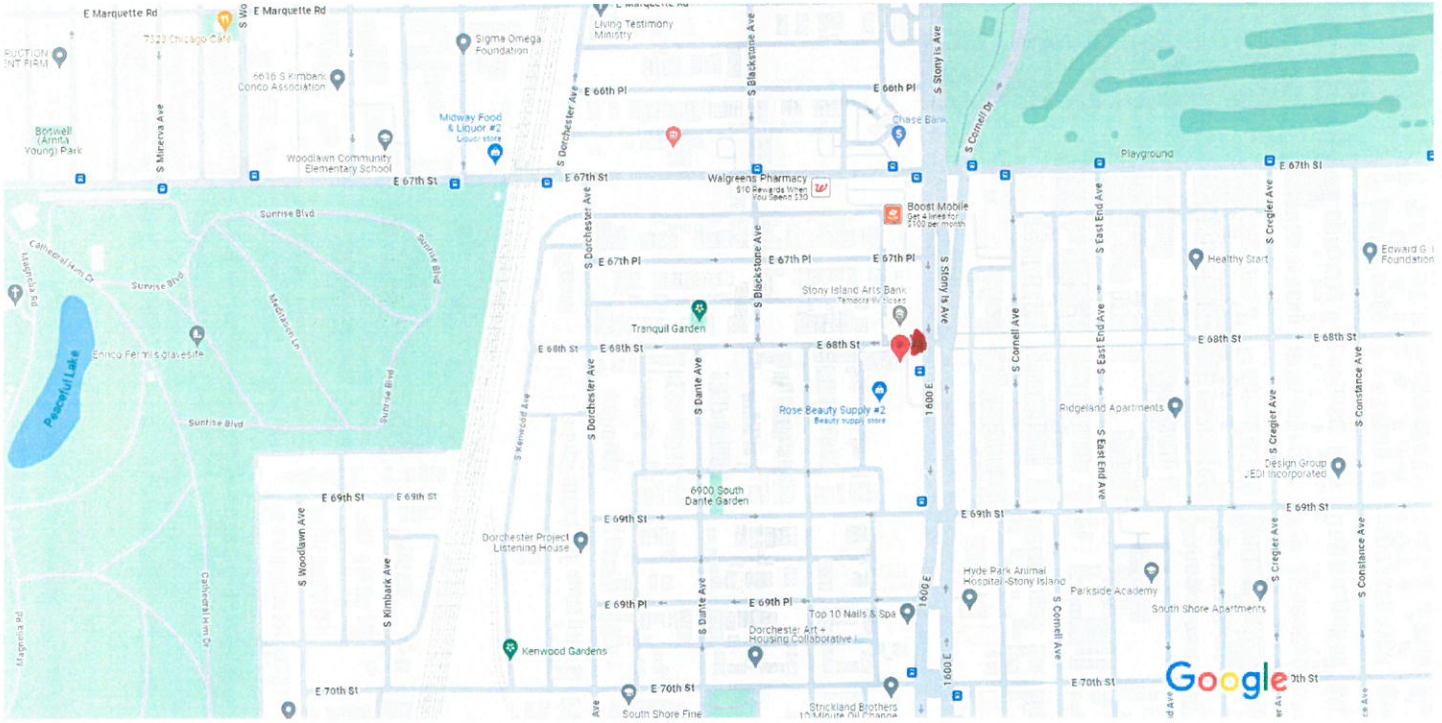
“People in the neighborhood looked at Mr. Coleman as the ultimate ‘father figure.’ A lot of the young men who got their first haircut from Coleman went on to become college and professional athletes,” Steele said.

During the height of the Bulls’ popularity, the Coleman Brothers Barbershop was a segment on NPR’s “This American Life,” titled “Bulls in the Barbershop.”

Coleman also joined forces with Dr. Terry Mason, chief operating officer at the Cook County Department of Public Health, on a program to encourage black men to get prostate screenings.

“In the black community, African-American men get a lot of advice from barbers. My father was more than a guy that would cut your hair every week. He was a trusted adviser,” Wheeler noted.

Google Maps 6800 S Stony Is Ave



Map data ©2024 Google 200 ft



6800 S Stony Is Ave

Building



Directions



Save



Nearby



Send to phone



Share

6800 S Stony Is Ave, Chicago, IL 60649

Photos







JACKSON HEWITT
TAX SERVICE

TRUSTED TAX PRICES
Expert tax services

Date:

Office of Budget and Management
121 N. LaSalle, Room 604
Chicago, IL 60602

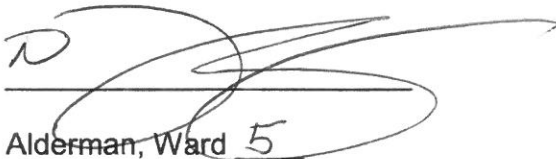
To Whom It May Concern:

I, Desmon Yancy, Alderman of the 5th Ward, hereby authorize the Office of Budget Management to withdraw the funds associated with the cost of installation for this honorary street designation for James and Richard Coleman from my:
Coleman Brothers

- Ward's annual menu program budget
- Ward's aldermanic expense allowance

upon passage of this honorary street designation ordinance, pursuant to Section 2-8-040 of the Chicago Municipal Code.

Sincerely,


Alderman, Ward 5