



Cheryl Davila
Councilmember
District 2

CONSENT CALENDAR
February 11, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Cheryl Davila and Ben Bartlett
Subject: Installation of William Byron Rumford Plaque

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the installation of a plaque to honor William Byron Rumford in the public right of way.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Estimated \$2,000 for costs of installation.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

One of the City of Berkeley's Strategic Plan goals is to champion and demonstrate social and racial equity. Honoring one of our City's most important African American leaders by raising his visibility supports this goal.

More than a year ago the Berkeley City Council approved funding from the Mayor and Councilmembers' discretionary accounts to fund the plaque. Through the Together We Can Make It Happen Foundation a beautiful plaque honoring William Byron Rumford was made.

This item authorizes the placement of that plaque in the public right of way at the most favorable location for public viewing and safety on Sacramento Street near the intersection of Tyler Street walkway.

BACKGROUND

William Byron Rumford graduated from pharmacy school at the University of California, San Francisco, in 1931 and a short time later moved to Berkeley. He opened a pharmacy which quickly became a gathering place for Black people across the Bay Area, and where he often posted voting recommendations in the windows.

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In 1942 Rumford was appointed by the Berkeley Mayor to the Emergency Housing Committee, which sought to find housing for wartime laborers. He also helped organize the Berkeley Interracial Committee that assisted new arrivals from the South. Additionally, Mr. Rumford actively opposed Japanese American internment and supported social justice causes.

In 1944, Governor Earl Warren appointed Rumford to the Rent Control Board, a state agency that was part of a federal wartime program to keep rents down. Building on his strong reputation and achievements, Mr. Rumford ran for and was elected to the California State Assembly in 1948.

Rumford was an impactful legislator, writing successful bills to reduce job discrimination in schools and racial bias in the California National Guard, as well as a law that made it illegal for insurance companies to refuse to cover Black motorists. Rumford's signature legislation that ultimately became the California Fair Housing Act of 1963, or the Rumford Act, that banned racial discrimination in the selling or renting of real estate.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No environmental implications.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

As the first black person to be elected to a Northern California Assembly office, Mr. Rumford made incredibly valuable contributions to our state and our community. Honoring him and raising his profile through placement of an educational plaque in the city helps inspire future generations.

CONTACT PERSON

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ATTACHMENTS: Resolution: Adopt a Resolution authorizing the installation of a plaque to honor William Byron Rumford

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RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZATION TO PLACE COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE FOR WILLIAM BYRON
RUMFORD IN PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

WHEREAS, The City of Berkeley strives to champion and demonstrate social and racial equity; and

WHEREAS, William Byron Rumford was a revolutionary figure from Berkeley, who served as the first Black Assembly Member elected to a Northern Californian office;

WHEREAS, William Byron Rumford authored the California Fair Housing Act of 1963 which banned racial discrimination in the selling or renting of real estate; and

WHEREAS, The City of Berkeley seeks to honor William Byron Rumford through installing descriptive and beautiful plaque; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Berkeley previously authorized funds for the honorary plaque;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley previously authorized and created plaque honoring William Byron Rumford be placed in the public right of way on Sacramento Street near the intersection of Tyler Street.

