



City of Chicago



O2021-681

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date: 2/26/2021

Sponsor(s): La Spata (1)

Type: Ordinance

Title: Honorary street designation as "Honorary Brandon William McGhee Way"

Committee(s) Assignment: Committee on Transportation and Public Way

Committee on Transportation and Public Way
February 24, 2021
City Council Meeting

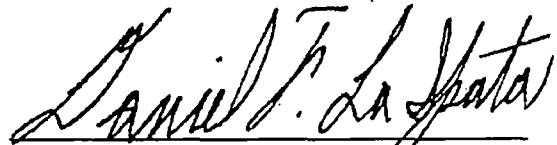
ORDINANCE
To establish Honorary Brandon William McGhee Way

NOW 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 **West Homer Street from North Western Avenue to North Rockwell Street (2400 West Homer Street to 2600 West Homer Street)** as

"HONORARY BRANDON WILLIAM MCGHEE WAY"

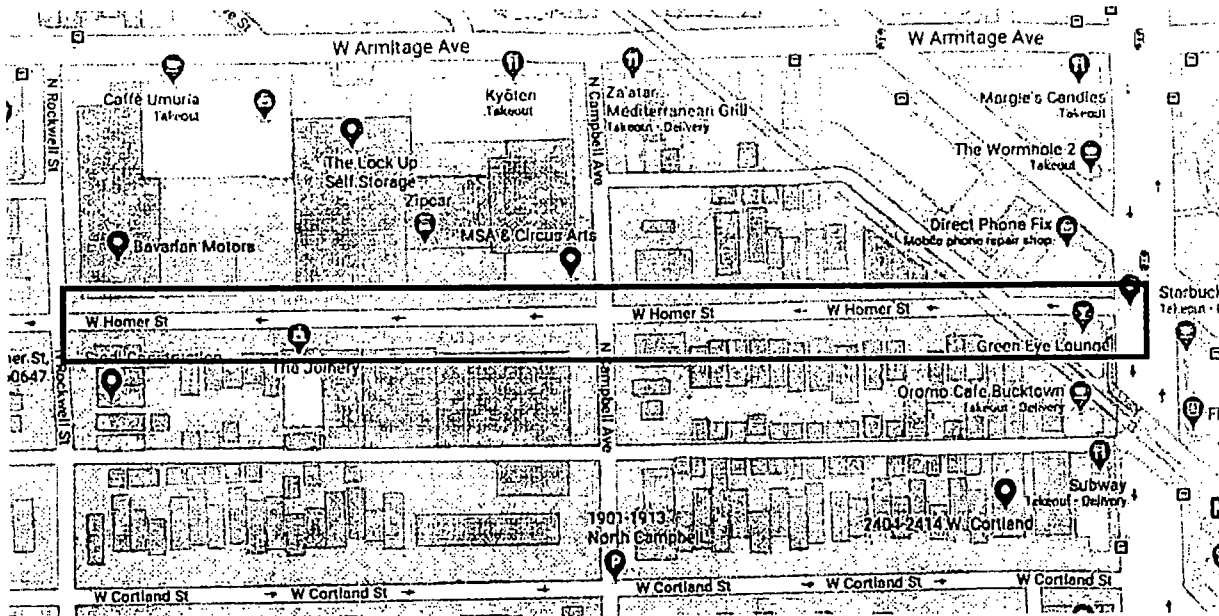
SECTION 2. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication.



Daniel La Spata
Alderman, 1st Ward

APPENDIX

2400 – 2600 West Homer Street is as follows:



Date: February 24, 2021

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

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Daniel La Spata, Alderman of the 1st Ward, hereby authorize the Office of Budget Management to withdraw the funds associated with the cost of installation for this honorary street designation for 2400 - 2600 West Homer Street from my:

~~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 1

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Brandon McGhee, 23, was a creative go-getter still figuring out what he wanted to do with his life. Instead, he became another victim of the city's violence. - Chicago Tribune

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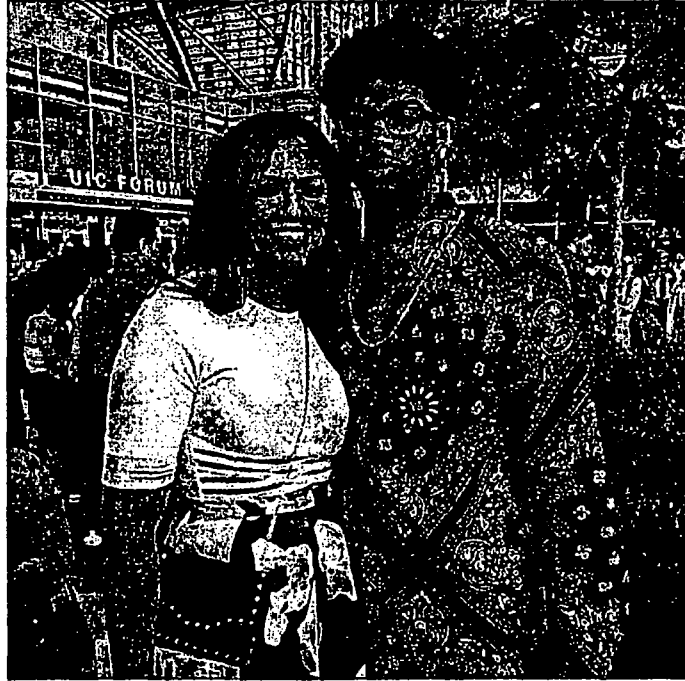
Brandon McGhee, 23, was a creative go-getter still figuring out what he wanted to do with his life. Instead, he became another victim of the city's violence.

By MORGAN GREENE
CHICAGO TRIBUNE | JUL 02, 2020



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Brandon McGhee, 23, was a creative go-getter still figuring out what he wanted to do with his life. Instead, he became another victim of the city's violence. - Chicago Tribune



Brandon McGhee, right, with his aunt Laurie Lane at his high school graduation. (Laurie Lane)

It was the first day of summer, and Brandon McGhee surprised his mom with a Saturday visit.

McGhee told her he wanted to start a career in radio — another surprise — but LaDonna Lane thought he had the right voice. Lane told her son she was thinking about a change of her own, maybe a move to Texas in a year or so.

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Brandon McGhee, 23, was a creative go-getter still figuring out what he wanted to do with his life. Instead, he became another victim of the city's violence. - Chicago Tribune

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For a few hours, the mother and son talked about the possibility of something new.

"You should move with me," Lane said, as McGhee laid back on her bed. "Why don't we go for a couple of years and just see?"

McGhee, 23, said he was thinking about moving too. He even had the same thought about Texas.

But, Lane said he wasn't sure, telling her: "I don't know, Mommy, I really have to think about it. You should go, because you deserve it. You can go for a couple of years. You can see how you like it, and if you don't like it, you just come back here."

"That's going to stay in my head all the time," Lane said.

A few hours later, shortly before 7 p.m. on June 20, McGhee and a friend were shot in Logan Square near the Western Blue Line. McGhee became one of 14 people killed in shootings during a weekend stretch in which at least **106 people** were shot in Chicago, according to authorities and Tribune data. Twelve of those shot were younger than 18, and five children died. That three-day period marked one of the most violent weekends Chicago has seen in recent years.

“He was always there,” Lane said. “I’m going to miss him. I’m going to miss him a lot.”

‘He just brought joy’

McGhee was creative and laid-back, a go-getter with glimpses of silliness. He dabbled in a clothing line, produced music, held tight to a notebook filled with drawings.

One day, McGhee invited his mom over for dinner at his place and surprised her with empanadas, a favorite, and she and his aunt wondered if he might become a chef after a string of restaurant-style meals. He had plans to come over and cook for them near the Fourth.

McGhee was all about basketball as a kid, his mother said, and Lane collected videos and pictures from his Lake View High School games. “You can go to the NBA, I know you can,” she told him.

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Brandon McGhee, 23, was a creative go-getter still figuring out what he wanted to do with his life. Instead, he became another victim of the city's violence. - Chicago Tribune
Brandon McGhee and his mother, LaDonna Lane (LaDonna Lane)

Laurie Lane, who tried to make her nephew's basketball and football games whenever she could, said McGhee was like a son to her.

"That's how close we were," she said. "When he was born, they had him in the nursery with the other babies, but they didn't have his name on his little bed. And when I walked in there, with the glass, something drew me to him. I knew it was him.

"He was a sweetheart by nature," his aunt said. "He just brought joy into people's lives."

After his senior year, McGhee moved on from basketball, but his mother watched as he started to build his life.

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McGhee worked at WhirlyBall before the pandemic, and the "entire organization was devastated to hear the news," the company said in a statement.

“Since 2016, Brandon has been part of our WhirlyBall family and to say he will be deeply missed is an understatement,” the company said. “Brandon was well respected, highly regarded and truly woven into the fabric of our culture.”

McGhee was always there when someone needed him, his mother said. He doted on his 4-year-old cousin and was the godfather of his best friend’s child, whom he adored. Another friend told Lane she once had to go to work and had no one to watch her child. She called McGhee to vent and ended up with a babysitter.

McGhee moved out a few years ago, his mother said, but he always called to check in. Since he lived close to Steppenwolf Theatre, where Lane works in human resources, she would sometimes visit after work.

Always, she said, “he was a great son.”

‘Have you heard from Brandon?’

When McGhee left his mom’s South Side home that Saturday, he headed north to his place. Lane knows because she texted to make sure he was safe.

“And he said, ‘Yes, I’m at home,’” Lane said. “And I said, ‘Are you sure you’re at home?’”

McGhee sent a selfie to prove he was home.

“That was the last time I heard from him,” Lane said.

Cook County prosecutors laid out McGhee’s final moments in court last month.

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Brandon McGhee, 23, was a creative go-getter still figuring out what he wanted to do with his life. Instead, he became another victim of the city's violence. - Chicago Tribune

Brandon McGhee before his senior prom. (Laurie Lane)

He was on his way to Puerto Rican Parade festivities in Humboldt Park shortly before 7 p.m., when three men, strangers to McGhee and a 16-year-old friend, crossed the street near the Western Blue Line, prosecutors said. They yelled: "What you be about?"

McGhee and his friend didn't respond. They tried to walk away after a man in the group threw a punch at the teen and then McGhee.

Another man in the group reached into his waistband for a gun. McGhee and his friend turned and ran.

A couple was driving on Western after dropping off their granddaughter when their front windshield shattered, a bullet narrowly missing the man inside.

As the gunman fired multiple rounds, the teen was struck in his right arm and McGhee in his neck. The friends' backs were turned.

Laurie Lane was the first to get the call. She ran downstairs. "Donna," she said, crying, "have you heard from Brandon?"

Lane called her son's phone. It rang and rang. She hung up. She called again. It kept ringing.

Finally a call came for Lane from McGhee's best friend.

"Mama, Brandon is dead."

'Innocent lives are being taken'

Lane traveled from Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center — where she had to fight to be let in because of the pandemic — and then to the Blue Line and her son's home.

In the coming days, she also joined the many other people identifying family members. "Everybody's crying, families coming in," Lane said. "We shouldn't have to go through that."

One person has been charged in the case, but he is not believed to be the shooter. Lane and her sister are still seeking justice.

“Innocent lives are being taken out of this world,” Lane said. “They need to take the guns off the street. They need to get (gangs) off the street. They need to —” she trailed off.

“I don’t know what to do.”

As Lane reached out to friends and family on Saturday night, she called her boss at Steppenwolf. A groundswell of support followed.

Brandon McGhee plays basketball for Lake View High School. (Laurie Lane)

Co-workers created a **GoFundMe** to cover funeral costs that to date has raised more than \$35,000. Comforting messages poured in, and the company started to send meals to Lane and her family.

“It’s overwhelming, you know,” Lane said. “The theater world, I love them, I do. And I’m just trying to figure out how I’m going to say thank you.”

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On Sunday afternoon, the sisters joined with friends and family, even a teacher from grammar school, to release blue and white balloons. A few attached notes to send to McGhee.

McGhee's funeral is planned for July 3 in Country Club Hills.

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Lane said she is working up the strength to write her son's obituary.

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“He’s still a young man, trying to decide what he wants to do in life. And that’s taken away from him. He didn’t deserve it, he didn’t deserve it.”

She will miss his smile, she said. His sometimes weird way of dressing. His hair — “He had so much hair.” His willingness to help. Surprise visits.

mgreene@chicagotribune.com



Morgan Greene



Morgan Greene is a metro reporter for the Chicago Tribune who covers human interest stories, breaking news, the park district and everything in between. A Cleveland native, she graduated from the Theatre School at DePaul University, joined the Tribune in 2015 as an editorial assistant and still enjoys seeing a good show on a night off.

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LOGAN SQUARE, HUMBOLDT PARK, AVONDALE

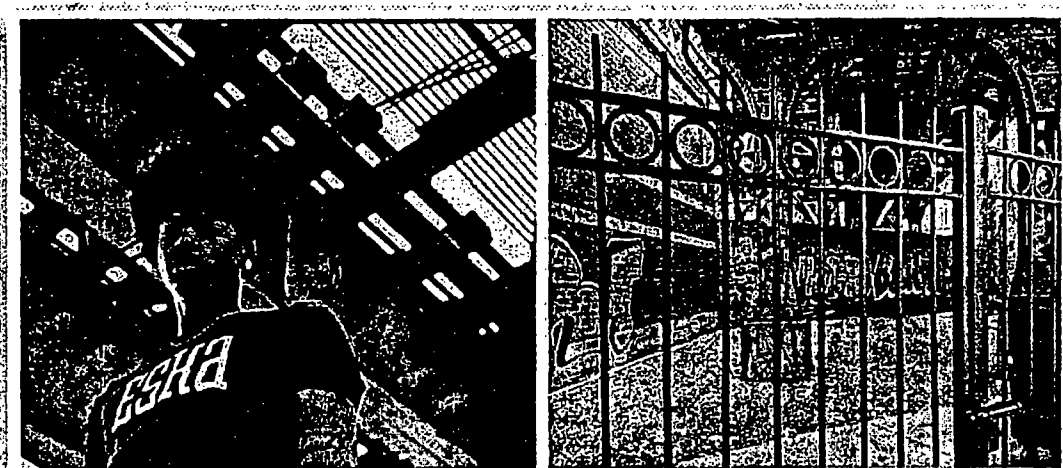
Mother Of Man Fatally Shot Near Blue Line Station Wants To Honor Son With A Mural Nearby — But CTA Making It 'Impossible'

The mother of Brandon McGhee, the 23-year-old who was killed, and Ald. Daniel La Spata (1st) have been trying for weeks to get the mural painted, but the CTA won't approve the project until they meet certain requirements.



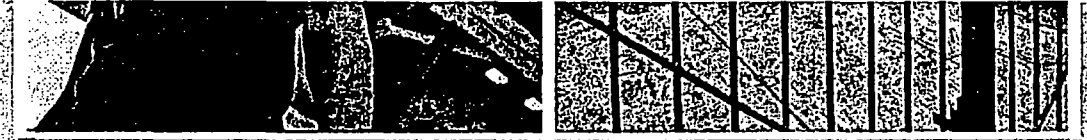
Mina Bloom

2:44 PM CDT on Oct 27, 2020



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Mother Of Man Fatally Shot Near Blue Line Station Wants To Honor Son With A Mural Nearby — But CTA Making It 'Impossible'



Credit: Provided

Brandon McGhee, 23, was fatally shot June 20 near the Western Blue Line station. His family has been trying to memorialize him with a mural but has run into hurdles.

Credibility:  Original Reporting  Sources Cited

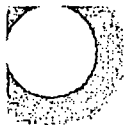
BUCKTOWN — After 23-year-old Brandon McGhee was fatally shot near the Western Blue Line station this past June, his mother and other family members set out to get a mural painted in his honor.

The plan was to have an artist paint portraits of McGhee on a building beneath the “L” tracks near where he was killed, a reminder the “caring and humble” young man didn’t have to die, his mother LaDonna Lane said.

But what started out as a straightforward project to help the grieving family heal has turned into a logistical nightmare.

Even with help from Ald. Daniel La Spata’s 1st Ward office, they’ve run into one obstacle after another with the CTA, which must approve the project because of its close proximity to the train tracks, Lane said.

After months of back and forth, Lane and La Spata have had enough and are now calling on the city agency to approve the project in time for McGhee’s birthday, Nov. 15.



2/19/2021

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La Spata said the process has been “unnecessarily traumatic” for Lane, who is already struggling after losing her only child to senseless violence.

“All we’re asking for is a little grace and leeway,” the alderman said. “We’ve been caught in some bureaucracy we’re struggling to find our way out of.”

'I Don't Understand Why They're Trying To Make Us Jump Through So Many Hoops'

It's been about four months since a gunman ended McGhee's life.

McGhee and his friend were on the way to the Puerto Rican Parade on June 20 when, just before 7 p.m., a group of men approached them near the Western Blue Line and shouted, “What you be about?” according to the Tribune.

The group of men started to throw punches at McGhee and his friend and then one of the men pulled out a gun and opened fire, hitting McGhee in his neck and his friend in his arm, according to Cook County prosecutors.

McGhee was pronounced dead on the scene.

Police have charged one person in the case, but that person is not believed to have been the shooter.



2/19/2021

Mother Of Man Fatally Shot Near Blue Line Station Wants To Honor Son With A Mural Nearby — But CTA Making It 'Impossible'



<https://blockclubchicago.org/2020/10/27/mother-of-man-murdered-near-blue-line-station-wants-to-honor-son-with-a-mural-nearby-but-cta-making-it-impossible-she-says/>

(from left) Brandon McGhee, 23, and his mother, LaDonna Lane. [Provided]

Lane was at home in Beverly when she found out her only son had been shot to death. She said he surprised her with a visit earlier that day and talked about how he wanted to work for a radio station.

But she said her son could've had his pick of careers because he was good at so many things: basketball, cooking and making clothing, to name a few.

"He did not deserve to die. Did not," Lane said. "He was still enjoying his life and still growing. He was only 23 years old. He had his life ahead of him."

After McGhee's tragic death, his family created a memorial on the site with flowers and candles.

The memorial didn't last long, Lane said. Passersby kept trashing it by breaking the candles and stealing the flowers.

That's when La Spata suggested Lane commission a mural on the building at 1912 N. Western Ave., steps from where McGhee was killed.



Lane liked the idea and enlisted a local graffiti artist who goes by the name Slangism to paint the mural. They quickly got permission from the owner of the building and then reached out to the CTA for approval. The CTA's approval is required because the project "can only be done by accessing CTA property," an agency spokesperson said in an email.

That set off four months of back and forth emails with no resolution.

"We are going about it the right way, asking for permission and talking to the owner and the alderman," Lane said.

"I could have went about it the wrong way and had the artist jump the fence but I did not. So I don't understand why it's so hard for the CTA to let us in and do the mural. I don't understand why they're trying to make us jump through so many hoops to have this done."

'All She Wants Is To Have A Space Where She Can Remember Her Son'

Over the course of the last four months, CTA officials have asked McGhee's family and La Spata to fulfill a number of different requirements.

At first, a CTA official asked for basic information, like how large the mural would be. But later the official said the artist is required to have a fiberglass ladder and a permit. Most recently, officials said the family needs \$2 million in proof of liability insurance.

"Every time we feel like we've learned the final hurdle with the CTA, it seems like there's three more requirements for us to meet," La Spata said.



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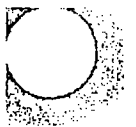
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A CTA spokesperson said the agency has agreed to waive the “normal right of entry fees.” It’s unclear how much the fees cost. The spokesperson didn’t respond to further questions.

The spokesperson said all the family needs is “proof of insurance with a railroad protective rider, which is a standard requirement for any third-party performing work on CTA property.”

But La Spata said the CTA is making the project “impossible.” He also takes issue with the fact that the city agency is using the same standards for the mural project as it would for a contractor developing near the train line.

“I cannot honestly imagine how much heartbreak and grief we’re putting LaDonna through with this,” La Spata said. “All she wants is to have a space where she can remember her son and have her memory celebrated.”



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The wall where Lane wants to paint the mural is close to the train tracks and locked behind a gate. [Provided[

Lane said she's worried the artist may not be able to paint the mural because of the winter weather. If the CTA had approved the project this summer, weather wouldn't have been an issue, she said.



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Mother Of Man Fatally Shot Near Blue Line Station Wants To Honor Son With A Mural Nearby — But CTA Making It 'Impossible'

She said she briefly considered painting the mural on a different wall that wouldn't require the CTA's approval, but quickly changed her mind after realizing the wall she chose is the most visible and close to where her son was killed.

She said she will keep fighting to get the mural painted at 1912 N. Western Ave.

"It's just frustrating because this is something that myself, my family and his friends really want to share with the world — what happened to Brandon and to tell everyone who he was," Lane said.

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Lightfoot did not say why the city needed to spend more than \$280 million on law enforcement as part of its response to the pandemic.

Kelly Bauer Mauricio Peña 1 hour ago

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Supporters of CPAC and GAPA, two proposals to create civilian oversight of the Chicago Police Department, are negotiating towards a compromise ordinance to fend off a third measure set to be introduced by Mayor Lori Lightfoot.

Justin Laurence 2 hours ago

CITYWIDE

Lightfoot Says Raising Bridges This Summer Was 'Right Decision' — And Doesn't Rule Out Doing It Again

"If there is a need, and that need is justified, I'm not going to hesitate to use any tool that is necessary to keep our residents and our businesses safe," Lightfoot said.

Kelly Bauer 2 hours ago

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