

January 24, 2022

Darrell C. Clark, Council President  
City Hall Rm 494  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Council President Clark:

RE: Center City Residents' Association Support for the Renaming of Taney Street

We are aware that *Rename Taney*, a group of concerned Philadelphia residents is petitioning to change the name of Taney Street. *Rename Taney* wants to permanently change the name to "LeCount Street" to honor Philadelphia native Caroline LeCount. CCRA wholeheartedly supports the decision to rename Taney Street "LeCount Street."

CCRA has heard many voices and perspectives from *Rename Taney* on why renaming Taney Street is important. Roger B. Taney, a Southern slave owner, has no connection to Philadelphia. He was also notorious as the author of the infamous *Dred Scott* decision from the US Supreme Court holding that black people were inferior and could never have the same rights as white people. It is widely agreed that this is the worst opinion ever to be issued by the Supreme Court.

By contrast, Caroline LeCount has a hyper-local connection to the city. She taught at a school located on Lombard St. between 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, and later on became principal of the same school. Outside of the classroom, LeCount was a leader of the city's African American community. She was best known for her efforts against streetcar segregation in the city.

During the Civil War, streetcar transportation was becoming an important part of the daily lives of black Philadelphians. But the segregation of the streetcars influenced a new generation of African American men and women to push for equal rights. One tactic practiced by African American women across the country was to defiantly board streetcars, knowing that they would be forcibly removed by the conductors. These women then appealed to the courts, seeking redress in the courtroom and also in the court of public opinion. On March 22, 1867, Pennsylvania passed a law banning streetcar segregation. Three days later, LeCount and a friend eagerly sought to board a streetcar. When the conductor refused to stop, but "sneered at them as the car passed on," LeCount took a copy of the new law to the nearest police officer, who arrested and fined the conductor.

CCRA is currently building a coalition with neighboring RCOs to address systemic racism. Knowing the history of Taney and LeCount, it is time for a change. Therefore, again, CCRA wholeheartedly supports the decision to rename Taney Street, "LeCount Street."

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

Sincerely,

  
Richard Gross,  
President

cc: Ben Keys, Rename Taney

**Board of Directors**

President: Richard Gross

Executive Vice President: Richard Speizman

Vice Presidents: Michele Ettinger • Barbara Halpern • Charles Robin • David Rose

Secretary: Susan Kahn • Assistant Secretary: Nathaniel Parks

Treasurer: Richard Speizman • Assistant Treasurer: Matthew Fontana

Directors: Judith Axler • Tina Breslow • Jeff Braff (past President) • Elena Cappella • Jim Duffin • Kate Federico • Gil Feinberg • Jared Gluskin • Charles Goodwin (past President) • William Goldstein • Richard Huffman • Stephen Huntington (past President) • Amy Jared • Susan Kahn • Wayne Macfadden • Douglas Mellor • Maggie Mund (past President) • Lauren O'Donnell • Harvey Ostroff • Richard Vaughn • Benjamin Weinraub • Irena Wight • Ben Zuckerman