

Constance Baker Motley

PLACE

Street Co-Naming Resolution

Whereas: *Constance Baker Motley (14 September 1921 – 28 September 2005) was an African American Civil Rights Activist, Lawyer, Judge, and State Senator.*

Whereas: *She was born in Connecticut, the ninth of twelve children. Her parents immigrated from the Caribbean; her mother becoming the founder of the New Haven chapter of the NAACP. Her legal career began as a law clerk in the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF), where she worked with Thurgood Marshall, Jack Greenberg, and others. The LDF's first female attorney, she became Associate Counsel to the LDF, making her the NAACP's lead trial attorney.*

Whereas: *In 1950 she wrote the original complaint in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, she was the first Black woman ever to argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court; in *Meredith v. Fair* she successfully won James Meredith's effort to be the first black student to attend the University of Mississippi. Motley was successful in nine of the ten cases she argued before the Supreme Court. The tenth decision, regarding jury composition, was eventually overturned in her favor. She was otherwise a key legal strategist in the civil rights movement, helping to desegregate Southern schools, buses, and lunch counters.*

Whereas: *In 1964, Motley became the first African American woman elected to the New York State Senate. In 1965, she was chosen Manhattan Borough President—the first woman and Black in that position. In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson named her a Federal Court Judge—the first Black woman so named—where she continued (including a term as Chief Judge) until her death.*

Whereas: *In 1993, she was inducted into National Women's Hall of Fame. In 2001, President Bill Clinton awarded her the Presidential Citizens Medal. The NAACP awarded her the Spingarn Medal, the organization's highest honor, in 2003. Motley was a prominent honorary member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.*

Whereas: *Her Leadership place in The Civil Rights Movement was recognized by all.*

Resolved: *Although she was a great person who made this world a better place, and received many awards while she was alive, it is past time for our Community to recognize, remember, and suitably honor our neighbor and a Great Harlemite; living at 555 Edgecombe Avenue for many years.*

by co-naming Edgecombe Avenue between 159th & 160th Streets -

Constance Baker Motley Place.