

Zora Neal Hurston Place

Street Co-Naming Resolution

Whereas: Zora Neale Hurston (January 7, 1891 – January 28, 1960) was an American folklorist and author during the time of the Harlem Renaissance, *she is best known as a leader of the Harlem Renaissance, her literary use of ethnographic studies*, and for her 1937 novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Whereas: Zora was the fifth of eight children of John Hurston and Lucy Ann Hurston. When she was three, Zora's family moved to Eatonville, an all-Black town with a population of 125, which Zora would glorify in her stories as a place black Americans could live as they desired, independent of white society.

Whereas: Hurston graduated from Morgan Academy, the high school division of Morgan College, in 1918. Later that year, she began her undergraduate studies at Howard University. While at Howard, Hurston became one of the earliest initiates of *Zeta Phi Beta Sorority* and co-founded *The Hilltop*, the University's student newspaper.

Whereas: In 1925, shortly before entering Barnard, Hurston became one of the leaders of the literary renaissance happening in Harlem, *producing the short-lived literary magazine Fire!! along with Langston Hughes and Wallace Thurman*. *This literary movement became the center of the Harlem Renaissance*.

Whereas: Hurston was offered a scholarship to Barnard College where she received her B.A. in anthropology in 1927. While she was at Barnard, she conducted ethnographic research under her advisor, the noted anthropologist *Franz Boas* of Columbia University. She also worked with *Ruth Benedict* as well as fellow anthropology student *Margaret Mead*.

Whereas: Hurston applied her ethnographic training to document African American folklore in her critically acclaimed book *Mules and Men*, along with fiction, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and dance choreography, assembling a folk-based performance group that recreated her Southern tableau, with a performance on Broadway. Hurston was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to travel to Haiti and conduct research on conjure in 1937. Her work was significant because she was able to break into the secret societies and expose their use of drugs to create the Vodun trance, also a subject of study for fellow dancer/anthropologist *Katherine Dunham* who was then at the University of Chicago.

Whereas: Hurston spent her last decade as an unappreciated freelance writer, working in a library in Cape Canaveral, Florida, and as a substitute teacher in Fort Pierce, where she died of a stroke and was buried in an unmarked grave. *In 1973 African-American novelist Alice Walker and literary scholar Charlotte Hunt found her unmarked grave in the general area where Hurston had been buried and decided to mark it. The publication of Walker's article "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston" in the March 1975 issue of Ms. Magazine revived interest in her work and helped spark a Hurston renaissance. Hurston's house in Fort Pierce is a National Historic Landmark.*

Resolved: *A beloved, brilliant, and committed lady whose work has affected all of our lives, she was also a fine neighbor and member of our Community as well as a Great Harlemite. Therefore we wish to honor her iconic Legacy, and the location where she lived for many years (Graham Court) by resolving to Co-Name 7th Avenue between 116 & 117th,*

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