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John Dukes, III
2259 NW 16th Ave
Gainesville FL 32605
(352) 371-4203 fax: 371-0072
DOCBUGGS@AOL.COM

June 9, 2008

City Of Gainesville
Ms. Chantel Dorsey
352/334-5070
Via E-mail to: dorseycr@cityofgainesville.org

Dear Madam or Sir:

This letter is written as a request to rename Northeast 20th Street in the Duval area of Gainesville to honor Ms Gloria Jean Merriex. It is suggested the new name be, 'GLORIA JEAN MERRIEX WAY'. Those of us who knew her best, called her Jean. The proposed boundary would include the section of NE 20th St south into the neighborhood fronting Duval Fine Arts Academy and north past NE 9th Place into the Cedar Grove/Super WalMart development.

Jean was a member of the Charles W. Duval Elementary (Fine Arts Academy) for 30 years and provided a foundation for the educational success of hundreds of students. She was widely known for the creation of an innovative, math skills teaching model, and was on the verge of a national distribution of her program. Her program was so creative and effective, the University of Florida's Lastinger Center for Learning, was working to prepare for national and global exposure. The Kellogg Foundation and the Smallwood Foundation, acknowledged the importance of Jean's revolutionary methods, with substantial grants to capture and share her formula for success in math.

The proof of Jean's impact on this community can be measured by the successes of her former students, many of whom contributed to State of Florida record gains, on the much talked about FCAT exams. Further, her selflessness extended far beyond the teacher workday and the schoolyard, to reach into nightfall, weekends, and the homes of the children she loved. The (re)naming of NE 20th Street would forever reinforce for her past students and remind future students of Duval, that the education of our children is a community asset and responsibility.

Finally and personally, Jean and my father, John Dukes, Jr. were members of a mutual admiration society. He served as her teacher, Principal and mentor, and through the years came to be known to her affectionately, as "Dally". Jean was also an avid, if not professional, shopper, whose prowess was legendary. How fitting, that 'GLORIA JEAN MERRIEX WAY', runs north past NE 9th Place (JOHN DUKES, JR. LANE?) and the JOHN DUKES, JR. MULTIPURPOSE BUILDING at Duval, to the SUPER WALMART!

Sincerely,

John Dukes, III
P.S. Just kidding about John Dukes, Jr. Lane

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