

MARCH 7, 2025

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS

Insert for the Congressional Record from Congressman Adriano Espaillat of New York's 13th Congressional District. It includes letters of support for H.R.6852 - the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act from the following:

1. The Rucker Family
2. The Marius Family
3. Lloyd A. Williams, President, The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce
4. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, NYPL,
5. Madison Square Boys and Girls Club
6. The Boys and Girls Club of Harlem
7. The Harlem Cultural Archives
8. WE ACT for Environmental Justice
9. Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement
10. Polo Grounds Towers Tenants Association
11. The Honorable Congressman Charlie B. Rangel
12. The Honorable Councilman Abreau of New York
13. The Honorable Senator Cordell Cleare of New York
14. Manhattan Community Board 10
15. Jackie Rowe, CEO and Founder, Harlem Mothers and Fathers Stop Another Violent End (S.A.V.E.)
16. H. Carl McCall, Chairman Emeritus, State University of New York
17. Harlem Globetrotter Bobby Hunter
18. Harlem Globetrotter Bob McCullough
19. Film Producer Bob McCullough Jr.
20. C. Virginia Fields is the President and CEO of the National Black Leadership Commission on Health
21. Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
22. Keisha Sutton-James, Manhattan Deputy Borough President
23. The Honorable Assemblyman Al Taylor of New York City
24. The Honorable Judge Tingling, Chair, West Harlem Development Corporation

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

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Assemblymember 71st District
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taylora@nyassembly.gov

Assistant
Speaker Pro Tempore

COMMITTEES
Banks
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March 05, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands

U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Esteemed Members of the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources,

I am Assembly Member Al Taylor, representing the 71st Assembly District in New York State, writing to express my wholehearted support for H.R.6852, the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act. I extend my gratitude for including it in the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Federal Lands legislative hearing on March 7th, and I implore you to advance this non-controversial legislation to the House Floor under suspension of the rules swiftly.

Holcombe Rucker Park, nestled in the heart of Harlem, New York, holds an esteemed place in American history, particularly within the realms of sports and culture. This iconic park, established in 1956, has served as a pivotal venue for basketball tournaments that have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but also transcended the court to become a symbol of cultural heritage and resilience in Harlem – the Black mecca of America.

In addition to honoring the legacy of Holcombe Rucker, it's important that we recognize the significant contributions of Greg Marius. Mr. Marius, a visionary and pioneer played a pivotal role in

transforming Rucker Park into a global phenomenon through the creation of the Entertainers Basketball Classic (E.B.C.) in 1982. Mr. Marius recognized the potential of street basketball as more than just a pastime; it was a platform for community engagement and cultural expression.

By designating Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site, we not only honor the legacy of Holcombe Rucker but also pay tribute to the vision and contributions of Greg Marius. Their collective efforts have not only shaped the cultural landscape of Harlem but have also inspired generations of athletes, artists, and community leaders across the country.

This federal recognition would not only preserve the park's legacy but also ensure that future generations can appreciate its role in shaping the cultural and sporting landscape of our nation. For these reasons, I earnestly request your support in advancing the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act. Doing so will significantly contribute to the preservation of this invaluable piece of American history and the celebration of the cultural diversity it represents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Al Taylor', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Al Taylor
New York State Assembly
Member 71st Assembly District

CC: Marquis A. Harrison
Board Chair
Community Board 10 – Manhattan

Karen Horry
Chair, Parks and Recreation Committee
Community Board 10 - Manhattan

From: Robert McCullough Jr.
5268 Cordelia Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215

To: The United States Congress

Re: H. R. 6852 The Naming of Rucker Park as a National Landmark

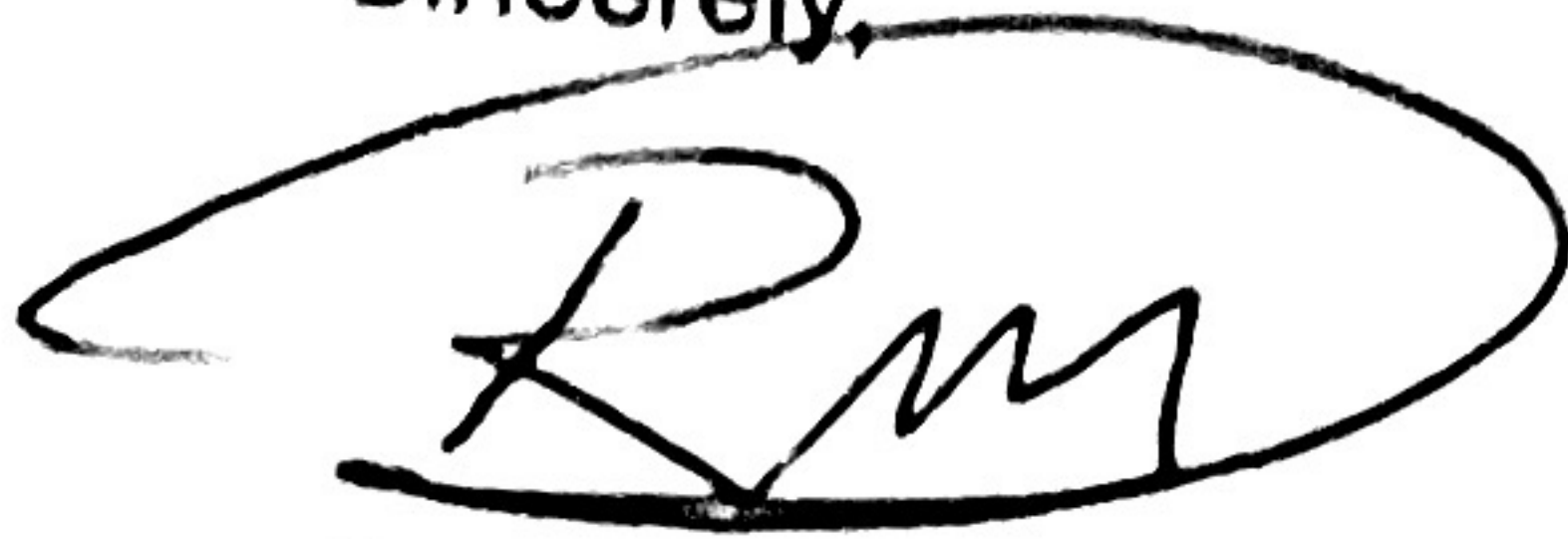
Ladies and gentlemen of Congress, it gives me great honor and great pleasure to state reasons why Rucker Park should be a landmark. Part of my development as a filmmaker is motivated by a quest of recognition for this man Holcombe Rucker, his pupils, Bob McCullough senior and Fred Crawford senior in order to bring to light the 1000s and possibly hundreds of 1000s of people that have been impacted by just the motivation of playing in or going to visit this "mecca of street ball" and this haven of global basketball.

As the producer and director of the Netflix Film #Rucker50 along with my colleague Darryl Neverson, we set out to commemorate five decades of impact on cultural pride and human cohesion based on sports in this documentary. The man Holcombe Rucker started an entity that would become a global icon with just a watch, a whistle and a basketball . This is outstanding and a testimony to mankind's greatest investment in youth. This Park Director in New York City's Parks Department, chose to invest his time in organizing groups of young men in divisions. From "Tots" all the way up to College and Pro groups in a League in the 50's & 60's, fostering camaraderie & rivalries in; Brooklyn, Bronx, Harlem, Queens, and Philadelphia. Later they would expand to New Jersey, Boston, Baltimore and more. This kind of foresight meant that he was caring for the youth, now in the summer with a sport that had genuinely only really taken place during the winter months. After Rucker's passing his pupils who participated from the Tots level and were also students in his PS 89 classroom, Bob and Fred, would go on to explode the legacy. Bob having been drafted by the Cincinnati Royals. Fred having played for the Milwaukee Bucks, the Los Angeles Lakers and the New York Knicks would relate to and encourage players to come and play against New York's finest ballplayers who had not yet made the NBA.

One instrumental occurrence was when the 1970 New York Knicks won the championship, only after losing in Rucker Park the summer before, to the Rucker Pros. It was assured that basketball talent was still yet untapped in the United States. Much of what Holcomb Rucker went to provide was a space for men who had pro talent to play at a time in which there were maybe two black players on NBA teams.

government I attest that the honor that this Bill seeks to bestow is quintessential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature consisting of the letters 'R' and 'M' in a cursive style, enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval.

Robert McCullough Jr.
Film Producer
#Rucker50

HOLCOMBE RUCKER PARK NATIONAL LANDMARK

HOLCOMBE Rucker Park deserves to be a national landmark for many important reasons. The following individuals played in, attended and visited Rucker Park.

Julius Irving--Philadelphia 76ers (1983 NBA World Champions) got his name in Rucker Park. He helped to revolutionize the NBA game and was most recently the spokesperson for "World Basketball Day"

Bill Bradley, New York Knicks (1970 NBA World Champions) played in Rucker Park; former NJ Senator and presidential candidate.

President Bill Clinton and Henry Stern, NBA Commissioner attended games in Rucker Park.

Nate "Tiny" Archibald Boston Celtics (1981 NBA World Champions), played in Rucker Park. He was the only player in the history of the NBA to lead the league in scoring and assists in the same year.

From: Bob McCulloch Sr.

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February 28, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman Tiffany, and Ranking Member Neguse,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for H.R.6852, the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act, thank you for including it in the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Federal Lands legislative hearing on March 7th, and to implore you to advance this non-controversial legislation to the House Floor under suspension of the rules swiftly.

Holcombe Rucker Park, situated in the heart of Harlem, New York, holds an esteemed place in American history, particularly within the realms of sports and culture. This iconic park, established in 1956, has served as a pivotal venue for basketball tournaments that have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but also transcended the court to become a symbol of cultural heritage and resilience in Harlem – the Black mecca of America.

In 1974, the playground was renamed Holcombe Rucker Park after Parks' beloved Playground Director at the request of Rucker's protégés. Holcombe Rucker (1926-1965) is remembered for the basketball tournaments he founded at this court and the generations of players he mentored. Rucker was a World War II veteran, Harlem junior high school teacher, family man, and graduate of the City of New York's City College.¹ He dedicated his life to uplifting Harlem through compassion, books, and basketball.

¹ Holcombe Rucker for the Basketball Hall of Fame (September 8, 2015),
<https://abcnews.go.com/Sports/holcombe-rucker-basketball-hall-fame/story?id=33609739>

Rucker's dedication to uplifting Harlem through basketball tournaments for less fortunate kids has left an indelible mark on the community.² Since its inception, Rucker Park has served as a vital recreational space for the Harlem community, providing a platform for local talent and fostering a sense of pride and camaraderie among residents. The park's basketball tournaments have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but have also offered a positive outlet for youth in the neighborhood.

Rucker Park, alongside the Polo Grounds,³ stands as one of the most significant venues in the history of basketball and hip-hop culture. The park has served as a breeding ground for basketball legends and has been a focal point for the convergence of sports and music, playing a vital role in shaping the cultural landscape of Harlem and beyond.⁴ Moreover, Holcombe Rucker Park has hosted legendary basketball players such as Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and Kobe Bryant. Its renowned summer basketball tournaments have become a staple of New York City culture, attracting spectators from all walks of life.

Rucker Park's rich history as a basketball mecca is unparalleled. From its humble beginnings to its status as a cultural institution, the park has played a significant role in the development of street basketball and has served as a launching pad for the careers of countless athletes.⁵ By designating Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site, we not only acknowledge its historical importance but also affirm the cultural contributions it has made to the fabric of Harlem and the broader American narrative.

This federal recognition would not only preserve the park's legacy but also ensure that future generations can appreciate its role in shaping the cultural and sporting landscape of our nation. For these reasons, I earnestly request your support in advancing the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act. Doing so will significantly contribute to the preservation of this invaluable piece of American history and the celebration of the cultural diversity it represents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,



Shaun Abreu
New York City Council Member, District 7

² Official Website of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation: Holcombe Rucker Park (Accessed February 21, 2024), <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/holcombe-rucker-park#:~:text=Holcombe%20Rucker%20is%20remembered%20for.and%20Fathers%20of%20the%20Sport>

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The City College
of New York



US Congressman
1970-2016

The Hon. Charles B. Rangel
Statesman-in-Residence

February 27, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
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Honorable Charles B. Rangel
US Congressman (1970-2017)
Statesman-in-Residence
The City College of New York

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February 27, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
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Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman Tiffany, and Ranking Member Neguse:

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Lloyd A. Williams
President
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February 23, 2023

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Tom Tiffany
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Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
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Washington, DC 20515

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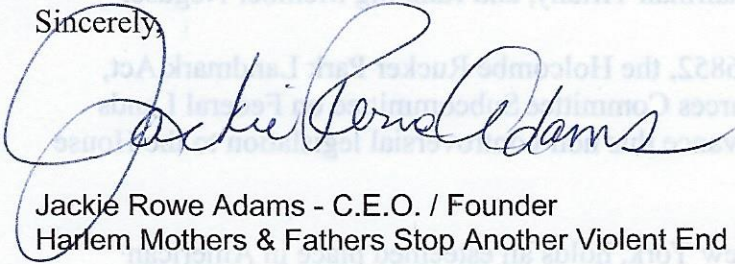
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Sincerely,



Jackie Rowe Adams - C.E.O. / Founder
Harlem Mothers & Fathers Stop Another Violent End (S.A.V.E.)

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<https://www.complex.com/sports/a/russ-bengtson/history-of-rucker-park-true-basketball-mecca>



HARLEM CONGREGATIONS FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT, INC.

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established
1986

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Rev. Dr. J. Albert Bush
Rev. James A. Kilgore
Ms. Sandra Oby
Imam Izak-EI Mu'eed Pasha
Rev. Dr. Carl L. Washington, Jr.
Rev. Dr. Jesse T. Williams, Jr.

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Rev. Charles A. Curtis, M.Div., Ed.D.

TRUSTEE EMERITUS

Rev. Dr. John E. Carrington

CHAIRPERSON - RETIREE

Joan O. Dawson, Ph.D.

FOUNDING EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

(In Memoriam)

Rev. Dr. Edward E. Johnson
Bishop Norman Quick
Bishop Roger Rhoss
Rev. Dr. Adolph Roberts
Bishop Preston R. Washington, Sr.
Rev. Canon Frederick B. Williams
Rev. Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker

March 1, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman Tiffany, and Ranking Member Neguse,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for H.R.6852, the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act, thank you for including it in the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Federal Lands legislative hearing on March 7th, and to implore you to advance this non-controversial legislation to the House Floor under suspension of the rules swiftly.

Holcombe Rucker Park, situated in the heart of Harlem, New York, holds an esteemed place in American history, particularly within the realms of sports and culture. This iconic park, established in 1956, has served as a pivotal venue for basketball tournaments that have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but also transcended the court to become a symbol of cultural heritage and resilience in Harlem – the Black mecca of America.

In 1974, the playground was renamed Holcombe Rucker Park after Parks' beloved Playground Director at the request of Rucker's protégés. Holcombe Rucker (1926-1965) is remembered for the basketball tournaments he founded at this court and the generations of players he mentored. Rucker was a World War II veteran, Harlem junior high school teacher, family man, and graduate of the City of New York's City College.¹ He dedicated his life to uplifting Harlem through compassion, books, and basketball.

Rucker's dedication to uplifting Harlem through basketball tournaments for less fortunate kids has left an indelible mark on the community.² Since its inception, Rucker Park has served as a vital recreational space for the Harlem community, providing a platform for local talent and fostering a sense of pride and camaraderie among residents. The park's basketball tournaments have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but have also offered a positive outlet for youth in the neighborhood.

Holcombe Rucker for the Basketball Hall of Fame (September 8, 2015),

<https://abcnews.go.com/Sports/holcombe-rucker-basketball-hall-fame/story?id=33609739>

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Office of Health & Wellness
Strategies
(212) 283-5266 PH
(212) 283-2697 FAX

Office of Real Estate
Development
(212) 281-4887 PH
(212) 281-8102 FAX

Office of Equitable
& Human Capital
Development
(212) 281-4887 PH
(212) 281-8102 FAX

HCCI Computer
Clubhouse
(212) 281-4887 PH
(212) 281-8102 FAX

CELEBRATING
37
YEARS
1986 - 2023

Rucker Park, alongside the Polo Grounds,³ stands as one of the most significant venues in the history of basketball and hip-hop culture. The park has served as a breeding ground for basketball legends and has been a focal point for the convergence of sports and music, playing a vital role in shaping the cultural landscape of Harlem and beyond.⁴ Moreover, Holcombe Rucker Park has hosted legendary basketball players such as Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and Kobe Bryant. Its renowned summer basketball tournaments have become a staple of New York City culture, attracting spectators from all walks of life.

Rucker Park's rich history as a basketball mecca is unparalleled. From its humble beginnings to its status as a cultural institution, the park has played a significant role in the development of street basketball and has served as a launching pad for the careers of countless athletes.⁵ By designating Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site, we not only acknowledge its historical importance but also affirm the cultural contributions it has made to the fabric of Harlem and the broader American narrative.

This federal recognition would not only preserve the park's legacy but also ensure that future generations can appreciate its role in shaping the cultural and sporting landscape of our nation. For these reasons, I earnestly request your support in advancing the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act. Doing so will significantly contribute to the preservation of this invaluable piece of American history and the celebration of the cultural diversity it represents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,



Dr. Malcolm A. Punter, Ed.D., MBA
President & C.E.O.

³ Polo Grounds, Google Arts & Culture (Last updated February 15, 2024), artsandculture.google.com/entity/polo-grounds/m02mjnm?hl=en.

⁴ Rucker Park - The Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://row.oneblockdown.it/blogs/archive/rucker-park-polo-grounds-harlem-new-york-basketball-hip-hop-history>

⁵ A History of Rucker Park: The True Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://www.complex.com/sports/a/russ-bengtson/history-of-rucker-park-true-basketball-mecca>

February 23, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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Rucker's dedication to uplifting Harlem through basketball tournaments for less fortunate kids has left an indelible mark on the community.² Since its inception, Rucker Park has served as a vital recreational space for the Harlem community, providing a platform for local talent and fostering a sense of pride and camaraderie among residents. The park's basketball tournaments have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but have also offered a positive outlet for youth in the neighborhood.

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Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and Kobe Bryant. Its renowned summer basketball tournaments have become a staple of New York City culture, attracting spectators from all walks of life.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,



Glenn A. Hunter
Co-Founder / Co-Executive Director
Harlem Cultural Archives Historical Society

⁵ A History of Rucker Park: The True Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://www.complex.com/sports/a/russ-bengtson/history-of-rucker-park-true-basketball-mecca>

February 27, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Carl McCall". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

H. Carl McCall
Chairman Emeritus, State University of New York

⁵ A History of Rucker Park: The True Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://www.complex.com/sports/a/russ-bengtson/history-of-rucker-park-true-basketball-mecca>



Schomburg Center
for Research
in Black Culture
The New York Public Library

February 28, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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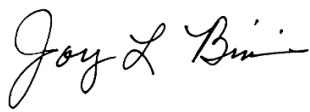
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Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,



Joy L. Bivins
Director
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

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February 29, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,

Jason W. Garcia
Madison Square Boys and Girls Club
250 Bradhurst Avenue NY, NY 10039

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CITY OF NEW YORK MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor New York, NY 10027
T: 212-749-3105 F: 212-662-4215
Website: <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb10/>

Hon. Marquis A. Harrison
Chairperson

Resolution To Support the Rucker Park Walk of Fame Promenade and Holcombe Rucker Statue in Rucker Park

WHEREAS Holcombe Rucker Park (Park ID M216) is a 3.05-acre park located on West 155th Street and Frederick Douglass Boulevard in the Borough of Manhattan in Community Board 10; and

WHEREAS In addition to the basketball court, the park has a baseball field, handball courts, children's playground, spray shower and restroom; and

WHEREAS The park, which houses the "reigning hallowed ground of streetball courts", is named after Holcombe Rucker, a local teacher and a playground director for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Rucker started a basketball tournament in 1950 in order to help less fortunate youth stay off the streets and aim for college careers; and

WHEREAS Since 1969, Holcombe Rucker Park has been a source of incalculable pride and entertainment for Harlemites as well as basketball enthusiasts the world over. What began in 1956 with Holcombe Rucker's youth tournament, which would lead to 700 Harlem youth receiving college scholarships, was carried on and expanded with each passing generation. Bob McCullough continued this legacy with the Rucker Pro Am tournament and Each One Teach One program, providing young people a source of pride and inspiration over the decades. Greg Marius would take up the mantle with the Entertainer's Basketball Classic, inspiring countless youth from NYC and beyond to achieve greatness. Both of these tournaments inspired basketball players throughout the world and drew the respect and participation of some of the world's greatest athletes and cultural icons; and

WHEREAS Many who played at the iconic park in the Rucker Tournament achieved a level of fame for their abilities, with several having gone on to play in the National Basketball Association (NBA); and

WHEREAS Mr. Rucker gave Black players an opportunity to play at a time when the NBA, founded in 1949, first started. At the time there were only 1 or 2 Blacks per team. There were few avenues like the Harlem Globe Trotters where teams of Blacks played together. In addition, players who were not able to go to college had the option to go to the Rucker to play; and

WHEREAS Many professional basketball players have played at the court even after gaining prominence. Many others developed their basketball skills at Rucker prior to becoming notable in the sport, including: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Kenny Anderson, Nate Archibald, Metta Sandiford-Artest, Sylvester Blye, Conney Hawkins, Roger Brown, Julius Erving, Bill Bradley, Joe Hammond, Earl Manigault, Jackie Jackson, Richard "Pee Wee" Kirkland, Larry "Bone Collector" Williams, Rafer "Skip to My Lou" Alston, Herman "Helicopter" Knowlings, Conrad "McNasty" Macrae, Charlie Scott and Wilt Chamberlain; and

WHEREAS Greg Marius founded the Entertainers Basketball Classic in 1982, when he was a young rapper with the Disco Four. Initially organized as a tournament between rival hip-hop crews, Marius's basketball showcase ingeniously connected the worlds of basketball and hip-hop. Expanding on Rucker Park's history as a place where neighborhood talent could play sports celebrities, Marius invited basketball stars to the weeks-long tournament. The growing number of players from the NBA drew enormous crowds, and in 1984 the tournament moved from Fred Samuel Playground (formerly Readers Digest Park) to Holcombe Rucker Park. Since its founding, NBA superstars like Kobe Bryant, Allen Iverson, Stephon Marbury, LeBron James, and Shaquille O'Neal have held court at the Classic. In the 1990s, Marius expanded his vision and integrated entertainers like Michael Bivins, Fat Joe, Jay Z, P. Diddy, Alicia Keys, Beyoncé, Rihanna, and Mary J. Blige into the program. Political and business leaders such as United States President Bill Clinton and NBA Commissioner David Stern have also joined the jubilant crowds at the Entertainers Basketball Classic; and

WHEREAS The Greg Marius Court was refurbished to include: (1) custom-made basketball goals, styled after the backboards and hoops in the 30 NBA arenas and practice facilities; making it the only outdoor court in the world with these high-quality goals, (2) a new surface for the court, eliminating the cracks and other defects in the current pavement, (3) new bleachers and team benches, (4) new scoreboard, (5) new gates and (6) repairs to the fence; and

WHEREAS Rucker Park has been featured in films and documentaries; "Above The Rim" (1994), TNT's : "On Hallowed Ground: Streetball Champions of Rucker Park" which aired in 2000 and won a Sports Emmy Award, "The Real: Rucker Park Legends---True Harlem Story" (2006), "Undeclared The Roger Brown Story" - PBS (2013), #Rucker50 Documentary (2016), and the 2018 film: "Uncle Drew"; and

WHEREAS The proposed Rucker Park Walk of Fame Promenade and Holcombe Rucker statue will have the potential to educate and pay tribute to esteemed players during events outside of basketball tournaments such as concerts; and

WHEREAS In 2022, Rucker Park became the first outdoor venue for The Basketball Tournament - a single-elimination winner-take-all tournament with a \$1million prize, acting as one of eight regional venues for the competition; and

WHEREAS a Coalition of the Holcombe Rucker Family, The Greg Marius Family, Each One Teach One and HCCI presented at the Wednesday, November 8th Manhattan Community Board 10 Parks and Recreation Committee meeting to introduce a proposal to capture the essence of the Rucker Park story in a compelling visual format, around the park itself, for local residents, players and visiting fans to enjoy. The goal is to enshrine the historic legacy of the Rucker Park; its community power and transformation, while telling the story of the historical figures for generations to come; and

WHEREAS In absence of quorum the sentiment of the Committee was to move the proposed Resolution to the November 29th Executive Committee meeting, where it was voted on to unanimously support the project; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT during the December 5, 2023 General Board Meeting, the board voted unanimously 36 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstention, and 0 Recusal to support the community-initiated request to upgrade the Holcombe Rucker Park, while preserving its renowned character, through the installation of the Rucker Park Walk of Fame Promenade and statue of Holcombe Rucker.

February 29, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman Tiffany, and Ranking Member Neguse,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for H.R.6852, the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act; thank you for including it in the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Federal Lands legislative hearing on March 7th, and to implore you to advance this non-controversial legislation to the House Floor under suspension of the rules swiftly.

Holcombe Rucker Park, situated in the heart of Harlem, New York, holds an esteemed place in American history, particularly within the realms of sports and culture. In 1974, the playground was renamed Holcombe Rucker Park after Parks' beloved Playground Director at the request of Rucker's protégés. Holcombe Rucker (1926-1965) is remembered for the basketball tournaments he founded at this court and the generations of players he mentored. Rucker was a World War II veteran, Harlem junior high school teacher, family man, and graduate of the City of New York's City College.¹ He dedicated his life to uplifting Harlem through compassion, books, and basketball.

This iconic park, established in 1956, has served as a pivotal venue for basketball tournaments that have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but also transcended the court to become a symbol of cultural heritage and resilience in Harlem – the Black mecca of America.

A pioneer behind these tournaments was Gregory Marius, a native of Harlem, who founded the Entertainers Basketball Classic (EBC) in 1982, which later evolved into the Rucker Park tournament. Marius was a visionary who created a tournament with basketball players and rappers. Greg started as a rapper with a rap group called "Disco 4". The group went on to sign a record contract, performing on tours around the world and other popular venues. Through the years, the group phased out, and the legacy of EBC started in the summer of 1982.

EBC tournaments became the pillar of streetball games throughout NYC. Greg's tournaments later included celebrities and entertainers such as Sean "Puffy" Combs, who was the first entertainer to start a team bringing many of his celebrity friends to the famous Rucker Park. The tournament became a platform for NBA players to show off their slick and fancy that proved to be streetball talent at its best. NBA basketball players from past to present were Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and the great Julius "Dr. J" Erving. The late Kobe Bryant, Shaquille O'Neil, Kevin Durant, Allen Iverson, Carmelo Anthony and LeBron James, to name a few, graced the court. Entertainers such as Fat Joe, Jay-Z, Beyonce, and Mary J. Blige sponsored teams in the tournaments which took EBC at Rucker Park to world – wide stardom. Its renowned summer basketball tournaments have become a staple of New York City culture, attracting spectators from all walks of life.

Rucker Park's rich history as a basketball mecca is unparalleled. From its humble beginnings to its status as a cultural institution, the park has played a significant role in the development of street basketball and has served as a launching pad for the careers of countless athletes. The famous Rucker Park basketball court was renamed **Greg Marius Court** in 2017 by Mayor of NYC Bill DeBlasio. The Marius Family is committed to keeping the EBC legacy alive. Greg's youth basketball clinic, **EBC Outreach Alliance Inc.**, will continue to uplift and empower young males through sports and mentoring. By designating Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site, we not only acknowledge its historical importance but also affirm the cultural contributions it has made to the fabric of Harlem and the broader American narrative.

This federal recognition would not only preserve the park's legacy but also ensure that future generations can appreciate its role in shaping the cultural and sporting landscape of our nation. For these reasons, I earnestly request your support in advancing the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act. Doing so will significantly contribute to the preservation of this invaluable piece of American history and the celebration of the cultural diversity it represents. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,

Elaine Marius Corporation, INC- **Entertainers Basketball Classic**



Cordell Marius

Stacey Marius

Charisma Marius

Cheryl Marius



OFFICE OF THE

MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

1 Centre Street, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10007

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Mark Levine, Borough President

February 27, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Tom Tiffany
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Joe Neguse
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In 1974, the playground was renamed Holcombe Rucker Park after the NYC Department of Parks' beloved Playground Director at the request of Rucker's protégés. Holcombe Rucker (1926-1965) is remembered for the basketball tournaments he founded at this court and the generations of players he mentored. Rucker was a World War II veteran, Harlem junior high school teacher, family man, and graduate of the City of New York's City College.¹ He dedicated his life to uplifting Harlem through compassion, books, and basketball.

Rucker's dedication to supporting Harlem through basketball tournaments for disadvantaged kids has left an indelible mark on the community.² Since its inception, Rucker Park has served as a vital recreational space for the Harlem community, providing a platform for local talent and fostering a sense of pride and camaraderie among residents. The park's basketball tournaments

¹ Holcombe Rucker for the Basketball Hall of Fame (September 8, 2015), <https://abcnews.go.com/Sports/holcombe-rucker-basketball-hall-fame/story?id=33609739>

² Official Website of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation: Holcombe Rucker Park (Accessed February 21, 2024), <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/holcombe-rucker-park#:~:text=Holcombe%20Rucker%20is%20remembered%20for.and%20Fathers%20of%20the%20Sport>



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Mark Levine, Borough President

have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities, but have also offered a positive outlet for youth in the neighborhood.

Rucker Park, alongside the Polo Grounds,³ stands as one of the most significant venues in the history of basketball and hip-hop culture. The park has served as a breeding ground for basketball legends and has been a focal point for the convergence of sports and music, playing a vital role in shaping the cultural landscape of Harlem and beyond.⁴ Moreover, Rucker Park has hosted legendary basketball players such as Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and Kobe Bryant. Its renowned summer basketball tournaments have become a staple of New York City culture, attracting spectators from all walks of life.

Rucker Park's rich history as a basketball mecca is unparalleled. From its humble beginnings to its status as a cultural institution, the park has played a significant role in the development of street basketball and has served as a launching pad for the careers of countless athletes.⁵ By designating Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site, we not only acknowledge its historical importance, but also affirm the cultural contributions it has made to the fabric of Harlem and the broader American narrative.

This federal recognition would preserve the park's legacy and ensure that future generations can appreciate its role in shaping the cultural and sporting landscape of our nation. For these reasons, we earnestly request your support in advancing the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act. Doing so will significantly contribute to the preservation of this invaluable piece of American history and the celebration of the cultural diversity it represents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,

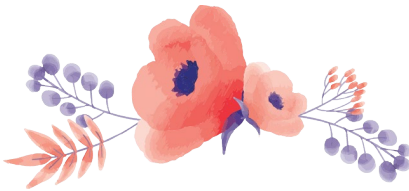
Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President

Keisha Sutton-James
Deputy Manhattan Borough President

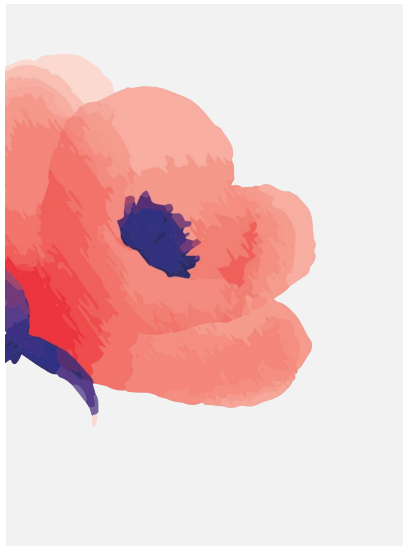
³ Polo Grounds, Google Arts & Culture (Last updated February 15, 2024), artsandculture.google.com/entity/polo-grounds/m02mjnm?hl=en.

⁴ Rucker Park - The Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://row.oneblockdown.it/blogs/archive/rucker-park-polo-grounds-harlem-new-york-basketball-hip-hop-history>

⁵ A History of Rucker Park: The True Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://www.complex.com/sports/a/russ-bengtson/history-of-rucker-park-true-basketball-mecca>



Polo Grounds Towers



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332-867-9965

Pgt10039@gmail.com

February 28, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman Tiffany, and Ranking Member Neguse,

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In 1974, the playground was renamed Holcombe Rucker Park after Parks' beloved Playground Director at the request of Rucker's protégés. Holcombe Rucker (1926-1965) is remembered for the basketball tournaments he founded at this court and the generations of players he mentored. Rucker was a World War II veteran, Harlem junior high school teacher, family man, and graduate of the City of New York's



City College.¹ He dedicated his life to uplifting Harlem through compassion, books, and basketball.

Rucker's dedication to uplifting Harlem through basketball tournaments for less fortunate kids has left an indelible mark on the community.² Since its inception, Rucker Park has served as a vital recreational space for the Harlem community, providing a platform for local talent and fostering a sense of pride and camaraderie among residents. The park's basketball tournaments have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but have also offered a positive outlet for youth in the neighborhood.

Rucker Park, alongside the Polo Grounds,³ stands as one of the most significant venues in the history of basketball and hip-hop culture. The park has served as a breeding ground for basketball legends and has been a focal point for the convergence of sports and music, playing a vital role in shaping the cultural landscape of Harlem and beyond.⁴ Moreover, Holcombe Rucker Park has hosted legendary basketball players such as Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and Kobe Bryant. Its renowned summer basketball tournaments have become a staple of New York City culture, attracting spectators from all walks of life.

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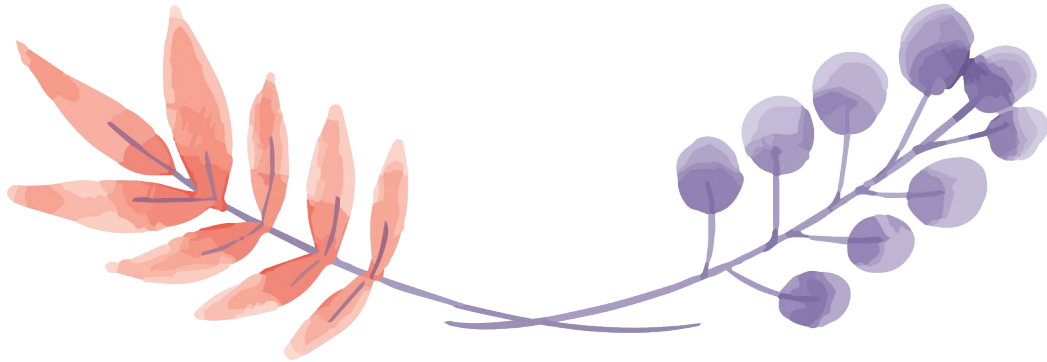
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Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,

Serena Chandler,
President
Polo Grounds Towers Tenants Association





FUNDAMENTAL COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS INC.

Phillip L. Rucker (son) President/Ceo/Founder

552 St. Johns Place Apt. 1A, Brooklyn NY 11238

Mobile/Text 929-603-1574, Landline 347-350-9064, Gmail Philliprucker291@gmail.com

February 29, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
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Washington, D.C. 20515

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In 1974, the playground was renamed Holcombe Rucker Park after Parks' beloved Playground Director at the request of Rucker's protégés. Holcombe Rucker (1926-1965) is remembered for the basketball tournaments he founded at this court and the generations of players he mentored. Rucker was a World War II veteran, Harlem junior high school teacher, family man, and graduate of the City of New York's City College.¹ He dedicated his life to uplifting Harlem through compassion, books, and basketball.

Rucker's dedication to uplifting Harlem through basketball tournaments for less fortunate kids has left an indelible mark on the community.² Since its inception, Rucker Park has served as a vital recreational space for the Harlem community, providing a platform for local talent and fostering a sense of pride and camaraderie among residents. The park's basketball tournaments have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but have also offered a positive outlet for youth in the neighborhood.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site. This federal recognition is a decades-long dream of Holcombe L. Rucker family to shine a light in the dark creating a platform for self-reliance, achieving quality American citizenship no matter the odds. My father Holcombe L. Rucker used lifelong mentorship and a "Pay it Forward" visionary socioeconomic vehicle that was simple and duplicatable. Thank You from the heart and mind. My name is Michael E. Rucker House and I am one of the nephews of Holcombe Rucker and I am in full support of Phillip Rucker and the plans for the community. Myself and the other surviving cousins are united in the vision of Phillip and the projects mentioned above.

Sincerely,

Philip L. Rucker
President, CEO, and Founder
Fundamental Community Foundations

CORDELL CLEARE
30TH SENATE DISTRICT

ALBANY OFFICE
ROOM 905
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New York, New York 10027
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EMAIL: CLEARE@NYSenate.GOV



THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK

CHAIR
AGING

COMMITTEES:

BANKS
CITIES 1
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, TOURISM, PARKS & RECREATION
EDUCATION
HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
SOCIAL SERVICES

February 29th, 2024

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman Tiffany, and Ranking Member Neguse,

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I implore you to advance this non-controversial legislation to the House Floor under suspension of the rules swiftly for a vote.

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CORDELL CLEARE
30TH SENATE DISTRICT

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THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Respectfully Yours,



Cordell Cleare
Senator | 30th District

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THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK

CHAIR
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COMMITTEES:

BANKS
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CULTURAL AFFAIRS, TOURISM, PARKS & RECREATION
EDUCATION
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SOCIAL SERVICES

March 5, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
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Tom Tiffany
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Subcommittee on Federal Lands
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1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman
Ranking Member Grijalva
Chairman Tiffany
Ranking Member Neguse

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Holcombe Rucker Park, situated in the heart of Harlem, New York, holds an esteemed place in American history, particularly within the realms of sports and culture. Since its inception, established in 1956, this iconic park has served as a pivotal venue for basketball tournaments, that has not only highlighted exceptional athletic abilities, but transcended the court to become a symbol of cultural heritage and resilience in Harlem – the Black mecca of America. .¹

At the request of Parks' beloved Playground Director and protégés, in 1974, the playground was renamed Holcombe Rucker Park. Holcombe Rucker (1926-1965) is remembered for the basketball tournaments he founded at this court and the generations of players mentored. Rucker was a World War II veteran, Harlem junior high school teacher, family man, and graduate of the City of New York's City College.² He dedicated his life to uplifting Harlem through compassion, books, and basketball.

Rucker's dedication to uplifting Harlem through basketball tournaments for less fortunate kids has left an indelible mark on the community.³ Today, Rucker Park continues to serve as a vital recreational space for the Harlem community providing a platform for local talent, fostering a sense of pride and camaraderie among its residents, and offering a positive outlet for youth in the neighborhood.

¹ Official Website of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation: Holcombe Rucker Park (Accessed February 21, 2024),

<https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/holcombe-rucker-park#:~:text=Holcombe%20Rucker%20is%20remembered%20for.and%20Fathers%20of%20the%20Sport>

² Holcombe Rucker for the Basketball Hall of Fame (September 8, 2015), <https://abcnews.go.com/Sports/holcombe-rucker-basketball-hall-fame/story?id=33609739>

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Rucker Park, alongside the Polo Grounds,⁴ stands as one of the most significant venues in the history of basketball and hip-hop culture. The park has served as a breeding ground for basketball legends and has been a focal point for the convergence of sports and music, playing a vital role in shaping the cultural landscape of Harlem and beyond.⁵ Moreover, Holcombe Rucker Park has hosted legendary basketball players such as Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and Kobe Bryant. Its renowned summer basketball tournaments have become a staple of New York City culture, attracting spectators from all levels of society.

Rucker Park's rich history as a basketball mecca is unparalleled. From its humble beginnings to its status as a cultural institution, the park has played a significant role in the development of street basketball and has served as a launching pad for the careers of countless athletes.⁶ By designating Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site, we not only acknowledge its historical importance but also affirm the cultural contributions it has made to the fabric of Harlem and the broader American narrative.

This federal recognition would not only preserve the park's legacy but also ensures that future generations can appreciate its role in shaping the cultural and sporting landscape of our nation. For these reasons, I earnestly request your support in advancing the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act. Doing so will significantly contribute to the preservation of this invaluable piece of American history and the celebration of the cultural diversity it represents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,



C. Virginia Fields
President and CEO



⁴ Polo Grounds, Google Arts & Culture (Last updated February 15, 2024), artsandculture.google.com/entity/polo-grounds/m02mjnm?hl=en.

⁵ Rucker Park - The Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://row.oneblockdown.it/blogs/archive/rucker-park-polo-grounds-harlem-new-york-basketball-hip-hop-history>

⁶ A History of Rucker Park: The True Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://www.complex.com/sports/a/russ-bengtson/history-of-rucker-park-true-basketball-mecca>



Founders

Vernice Miller-Travis
Peggy M. Shepard
Chuck Sutton

February 28, 2024

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1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

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1332 Longworth House Office Building
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1324 Longworth House Office Building
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Carlos Talero
Vernice Miller-Travis
Anne Weisberg

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman Tiffany, and Ranking Member Neguse:

I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for H.R.6852, the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act, to thank you for including it in the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Federal Lands legislative hearing on March 7th, and to implore you to swiftly advance this non-controversial legislation to the House Floor under suspension of the rules.

Holcombe Rucker Park is located a few blocks from our Harlem headquarters, and across the street from the Polo Grounds Towers, a New York City Housing Authority public housing complex built on the site of a legendary sports stadium. Like the former Polo Grounds stadium, Holcombe Rucker Park holds an esteemed place in American history, particularly within the realms of sports and culture. This iconic park, established in 1956, has served as a pivotal venue for basketball tournaments that have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but also transcended the court to become a symbol of cultural heritage and resilience in Harlem – the Black mecca of America.

In 1974, the playground was renamed Holcombe Rucker Park after Parks' beloved Playground Director at the request of Rucker's protégés. Holcombe Rucker (1926-1965) is remembered for the basketball tournaments he founded at this court and the generations of players he mentored. Rucker was a World War II veteran, Harlem junior high school teacher, family man, and graduate of the City of New York's City College.¹ He dedicated his life to uplifting Harlem through compassion, books, and basketball.

¹ Holcombe Rucker for the Basketball Hall of Fame (September 8, 2015), <https://abcnews.go.com/Sports/holcombe-rucker-basketball-hall-fame/story?id=33609739>
New York, NY Office: 1854 Amsterdam Avenue, 2nd Floor | New York, NY 10031 | Phone: (212) 961-1000 | Fax: (212) 961-1015
Washington, DC Office: 50 F Street, NW, Suite 550 | Washington, DC 20001 | Phone: 202-800-5896 | Fax: (202) 547-6009
www.WE ACT .org



Rucker's dedication to uplifting Harlem through basketball tournaments for less fortunate kids has left an indelible mark on the community and taught generations of children about the importance of team sports.² Since its inception, Rucker Park has served as a vital recreational space for the Harlem community, providing a platform for local talent and fostering a sense of pride and camaraderie among residents. The park's basketball tournaments have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but have also offered a positive, healthy outlet for youth in the neighborhood.

Rucker Park, alongside the Polo Grounds,³ stands as one of the most significant venues in the history of basketball and hip-hop culture. The park has served as a breeding ground for basketball legends and has been a focal point for the convergence of sports and music, playing a vital role in shaping the cultural landscape of Harlem and beyond.⁴ Moreover, Holcombe Rucker Park has hosted legendary basketball players such as Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and Kobe Bryant. Its renowned summer basketball tournaments have become a staple of New York City culture, attracting spectators from all walks of life and inspiring generations of children to embrace the joys and health benefits of sport.

Rucker Park's rich history as a basketball mecca is unparalleled. From its humble beginnings to its status as a cultural institution, the park has played a significant role in the development of street basketball and has served as a launching pad for the careers of countless athletes.⁵ By designating Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site, we not only acknowledge its historical importance but also affirm the cultural contributions it has made to the fabric of Harlem and the broader American narrative.

This federal recognition would not only preserve the park's legacy but also ensure that future generations can appreciate its role in shaping the cultural and sporting landscape of our nation. For these reasons, we earnestly request your support in advancing the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act. Doing so will significantly contribute to the preservation of this invaluable piece of American history and the celebration of the cultural diversity it represents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy Shepard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "S".

Peggy Shepard
Co-Founder & Executive Director
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
1854 Amsterdam Avenue, Second Floor
Harlem, NY 10031

² Official Website of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation: Holcombe Rucker Park (Accessed February 21, 2024),

<https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/holcombe-rucker-park#:~:text=Holcombe%20Rucker%20is%20remembered%20for,and%20Fathers%20of%20the%20Sport>

³ Polo Grounds, Google Arts & Culture (Last updated February 15, 2024), artsandculture.google.com/entity/polo-grounds/m02mjnm?hl=en.

⁴ Rucker Park - The Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://row.oneblockdown.it/blogs/archive/rucker-park-polo-grounds-harlem-new-york-basketball-hip-hop-history>

⁵ A History of Rucker Park: The True Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://www.complex.com/sports/a/russ-bengtson/history-of-rucker-park-true-basketball-mecca>



Marquis A. Harrison

Chairperson

Minah Whyte
District Manager

CITY OF NEW YORK MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor New York, NY 10027

T: 212-749-3105 F: 212-662-4215

Website: <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb10/>

February 28, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman Tiffany, and Ranking Member Neguse,

Manhattan Community Board 10 is writing to express our wholehearted support for H.R.6852, the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act, thank you for including it in the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Federal Lands legislative hearing on March 7th, and to implore you to advance this non-controversial legislation to the House Floor under suspension of the rules swiftly.

Holcombe Rucker Park, situated in the heart of Harlem, New York, holds an esteemed place in American history, particularly within the realms of sports and culture. This iconic park, established in 1956, has served as a pivotal venue for basketball tournaments that have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but also transcended the court to become a symbol of cultural heritage and resilience in Harlem – the Black mecca of America.

In 1974, the playground was renamed Holcombe Rucker Park after Parks 'beloved Playground Director at the request of Rucker's protégés. Holcombe Rucker (1926-1965) is remembered for the basketball tournaments he founded at this court and the generations of players he mentored. Rucker was a World War II veteran, Harlem junior high school teacher, family man, and graduate of the City of New York's City College. He dedicated his life to uplifting Harlem through compassion, books, and basketball.

Rucker's dedication to uplifting Harlem through basketball tournaments for less fortunate kids has left an indelible mark on the community. Since its inception, Rucker Park has served as a vital recreational space for the Harlem community, providing a platform for local talent and fostering a sense of pride and camaraderie among residents. The park's basketball tournaments have not only showcased exceptional athletic abilities but have also offered a positive outlet for youth in the neighborhood.

Rucker Park, alongside the Polo Grounds, stands as one of the most significant venues in the history of basketball and hip-hop culture. The park has served as a breeding ground for basketball legends and has been a focal point for the convergence of sports and music, playing a vital role in shaping the cultural landscape of Harlem and beyond. Moreover, Holcombe Rucker Park has hosted legendary basketball players such as Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and Kobe Bryant. Its renowned summer basketball tournaments have become a staple of New York City culture, attracting spectators from all walks of life.

Rucker Park's rich history as a basketball mecca is unparalleled. From its humble beginnings to its status as a cultural institution, the park has played a significant role in the development of street basketball and has served as a launching pad for the careers of countless athletes. By designating Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site, we not only acknowledge its historical importance but also affirm the cultural contributions it has made to the fabric of Harlem and the broader American narrative.

Manhattan Community Board 10 unanimously voted for a full Board Resolution on December 5th, 2023 to support a community-initiated request to upgrade the Holcombe Rucker Park, while preserving its renowned character, through the installation of a Rucker Park Walk of Fame Promenade and the statue of Holcombe Rucker.

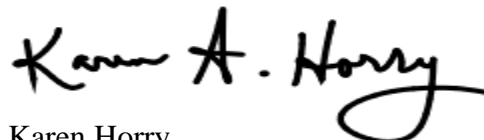
This federal recognition would not only preserve the park's legacy but also ensure that future generations can appreciate its role in shaping the cultural and sporting landscape of our nation. For these reasons, Manhattan Community Board 10 earnestly requests your support in advancing the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act. Doing so will significantly contribute to the preservation of this invaluable piece of American history and the celebration of the cultural diversity it represents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,



Marquis Harrison
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 10



Karen Horry
Chair
Parks and Recreation Committee
Manhattan Community Board 10



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF HARLEM

February 26, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources
1332 Longworth House Office
Washington, DC 20515

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources
1332 Longworth House Office
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman Tiffany, and Ranking Member Neguse,

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¹ Holcombe Rucker for the Basketball Hall of Fame (September 8, 2015), <https://abcnews.go.com/Sports/holcombe-rucker-basketball-hall-fame/story?id=33609739>

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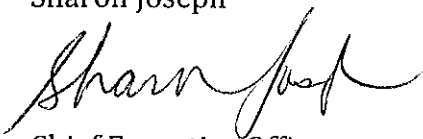
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This federal recognition would not only preserve the park's legacy but also ensure that future generations can appreciate its role in shaping the cultural and sporting landscape of our nation. For these reasons, I earnestly request your support in advancing the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act. Doing so will significantly contribute to the preservation of this invaluable piece of American history and the celebration of the cultural diversity it represents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,

Sharon Joseph



Chief Executive Officer
Boys and Girls Club of Harlem

² Official Website of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation: Holcombe Rucker Park (Accessed February 21, 2024), <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/holcombe-rucker-park#:~:text=Holcombe%20Rucker%20is%20remembered%20for.and%20Fathers%20of%20the%20Sport>

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⁵ A History of Rucker Park: The True Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://www.complex.com/sports/a/russ-bengtson/history-of-rucker-park-true-basketball-mecca>

March 6, 2024

Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman Tiffany, and Ranking Member Neguse,

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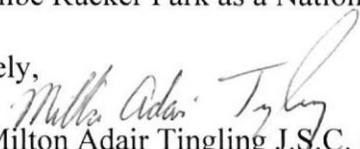
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This federal recognition would not only preserve the park's legacy but also ensure that future generations can appreciate its role in shaping the cultural and sporting landscape of our nation. For these reasons, I earnestly request your support in advancing the Holcombe Rucker Park Landmark Act. Doing so will significantly contribute to the preservation of this invaluable piece of American history and the celebration of the cultural diversity it represents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly await your support for H.R.6852 and the designation of Holcombe Rucker Park as a National Commemorative Site.

Sincerely,


Hon. Milton Adair Tingling J.S.C. (Ret.)

Chair

West Harlem Development Corporation

⁵ A History of Rucker Park: The True Mecca of Basketball (Last accessed February 21, 2024) <https://www.complex.com/sports/a/russ-bengtson/history-of-rucker-park-true-basketball-mecca>