

Ordinance No. 1307-2025

Council Member Spencer

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE

Changing the name of Herman Park, located at Herman Avenue and West 59th Street, to “Judge Raymond L. Pianka Park” upon completion of Herman Park renovations and site improvements.

WHEREAS, the Pianka family home where Ray grew up was located at 6310 West Clinton Avenue and Ray’s family owned this home until 1996; in the late 1970s, Ray made his home on Franklin Boulevard with his wife, Karen and daughter, Kirsten;

WHEREAS, Ray was known for his detailed historic knowledge and lifelong advocacy for the Detroit Shoreway neighborhood, including near daily walks throughout the neighborhood and in the area surrounding Herman Park, until his sudden passing in January 2017 at the age of 65; and

WHEREAS, Ray Pianka began his career serving as a City Council Aide to Councilman Michael Zone from 1972-73, and served as Councilman for Ward 15 (then Ward 17) from 1986-1995; and

WHEREAS, in 1973-74, Ray Pianka was one of the founders of and first executive director for the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization (now Northwest Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation); and

WHEREAS, he was elected to the Cleveland Municipal Housing Court in 1995 where Judge Pianka advocated from the bench for his city and residents by holding negligent landlords and banks responsible for upholding safe, decent housing; and

WHEREAS, Ray was passionate about history and loved to share stories and details with all; as the *Plain Press* published, “Pianka had a love for neighborhood history and preservation of historic buildings. He often told *Plain Press* staff members he would like to find some time to write some articles for the *Plain Press* about neighborhood history.”; and

WHEREAS, in a memorial to Ray, the Cleveland Restoration Society noted his love for historic buildings and wrote of his efforts in 1978 to save the Gordon Square Arcade, now an anchor for the neighborhood, from demolition when part of the building fell onto W. 65th Street; and

WHEREAS, *Attorney-at-Law Magazine* wrote, “He also loved the architecture that was constructed in the early years of Cleveland. As a Councilman, he worked to protect many of his ward’s historic structures, and made the City’s landmarks ordinances stronger in an effort to protect our past, and continued as a jurist, using local historians to write about important historic structures to bring awareness to the need to preserve these structures and our heritage.”; and

WHEREAS, published by the Center for Community Progress on January 27, 2017, Allan Mallach wrote, “As the City’s housing court judge for over two decades, Ray became something close to a legend among people engaged in fighting neighborhood decline and abandoned properties, not just in Cleveland but across the United States. Ray took on predatory lenders, irresponsible property owners, even city officials if he felt they were not doing right by the city he loved and its people. For Ray, the administrations of justice was not an end in itself, but a means toward making conditions better for Cleveland’s people.”; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Cleveland want to honor Judge Raymond L. Pianka by changing the name of Herman Park to “Judge Raymond L. Pianka Park” in recognition

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of his dedication and noble character as a longtime community steward and tireless civic leader; and

WHEREAS, this ordinance constitutes an emergency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, property, health or safety; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND:

Section 1. That the name of Herman Park, located at Herman Avenue and West 59th Street, be changed to “Judge Raymond L. Pianka Park” upon completion of Herman Park renovations and site improvements, and that the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation is authorized and directed to take the necessary action to affect said name change and to post the proper signs at the park.

Section 2. That this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Jho 10-13-25

FOR: Councilmember Spencer

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READ FIRST TIME on OCTOBER 13, 2025

**and referred to DIRECTORS of Parks and Recreation; Law;
COMMITTEES on Municipal Services and Properties; Finance**

REPORTS

CITY CLERK

READ SECOND TIME

CITY CLERK

READ THIRD TIME

PRESIDENT

CITY CLERK

APPROVED

MAYOR

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REPORT after Second Reading

**PASSAGE RECOMMENDED BY
COMMITTEE ON
MUNICIPAL SERVICES
AND PROPERTY**

FILED WITH COMMITTEE

**PASSAGE RECOMMENDED BY
COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE**

FILED WITH COMMITTEE