

**Dr. Albert Vann Way**

**Co-Street Naming Ceremony**

**Macdonough Street and Stuyvesant Avenue**

**For Dr. Albert Vann**

**A Sower of the Seeds of Activism**

A giant, steadfast warrior.

A visionary and fearless leader in the quest for social justice and community empowerment.

You would have been 90 years old in this place called America.

You have endowed us with the spirit of your activism through your leadership roles in government and in our community.

You have understood the power and value of listening, negotiating, and building coalitions to advocate for change.

Like the SOS that Amiri Baraka issued to Black artists, musicians, and writers after the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965, you heeded an SOS in our community and led the efforts to reclaim our schools and institutions when they were in trouble.

As a founder of the African American Teachers Association, with Brother Jitu Weusi, you advocated for recruiting more Black teachers into our inner-city schools and for developing a culturally-relevant curriculum.

You led the efforts in advocating for a four-year college in Central Brooklyn and resisted efforts by the Board of Higher Education to create an ‘experimental’ two-year college that would become Medgar Evers College.

You chaired the coalition of 35 Bed Stuyvesant community organizations and leaders who became founders of Medgar Evers College in 1970.

And you continued this struggle and would not be deterred when CUNY and city-wide budget cuts in 1975 led to restructuring of Medgar Evers College into a community college.

As a NY State Assembly Member and Community leader, you worked with President Edison O Jackson to restore Medgar Evers College to senior college status in 1994.

You have worked with and supported every college president since the founding of Medgar Evers College.

You have supported the College's advocacy, policy, cultural and educational centers:

The Center for Law and Social Justice

The DuBunche Center

The Center for Black Literature

The Male Empowerment and Development Center

We have valued your unwavering support and leadership and presented you with an Honorary Doctorate in 2021.

Our writers, musicians, and artists have written poems, essays, and novels, and created music and art that embody your philosophy and way of life.

Pharoah Sanders. *Save Our Children*

Max Roach. *We Insist: Freedom Suite Now*

Margaret Walker: "For My People"

Haki Madhubuti: *Liberation Narratives*

Maya Angelou: "And Still I Rise,"

and

Eddie Glaude Jr. *We are the Leaders We Have Been Waiting For.*

You have reminded us that in the words of the novelist and literary activist John Oliver Killens, “We must be long-distance runners.”

**Dr. Albert Vann Way** will embody what the Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison calls “a site of memory” in our consciousness.

Morrison tells us that recounting our sites of memory is a way to understand, explore, and deepen our knowledge of traditions, history and culture.

**Dr. Albert Vann Way** is a site of memory that will forever evoke the significance of the role you have played in advocating for social justice on your journey through life.

We at the Center for Black Literature and Medgar Evers College salute the family and City Council for bestowing this honor on our fearless leader.

Dr. Brenda M. Greene, Professor of English

Founder & Executive Director, Center for Black Literature

Medgar Evers College, CUNY