## STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** | 5 | **Name:** | Hiedi Popochock |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2018-0321 | **Date:** | July 24, 2018 |

**SUBJECT**

An ORDINANCE to name the King County Administration Building, the 500 Fourth Avenue block and any building on the 500 Fourth Avenue block to the John Spellman Block and Memorial Building.

**SUMMARY**

Proposed Ordinance 2018-0321 would name the King County Administration Building located at the 500 Fourth Avenue block in Seattle, Washington and any other buildings that reside on this block to the John Spellman Block and Memorial Building. The proposed ordinance would also name the 500 Fourth Avenue block as the John Spellman Block and Memorial Building.

The naming of the 500 Fourth Avenue block and the King County Administration building would honor the late John Dennis Spellman, who was the first King County executive (1969-1981). After serving as the King County executive, Mr. Spellman served one term as the governor of Washington State from 1981 to 1985.

Council’s legal counsel review of the proposed ordinance is ongoing.

**BACKGROUND**

John Dennis Spellman was born on December 29, 1926, in Seattle, Washington to Sterling Bartholomew (Bart) and Lela Spellman. Mr. Spellman had two siblings: Mary Catherine born in 1924, and David Bartholomew born 15 months after Mary.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Education. Mr. Spellman left Seattle Prep in January of 1944, midway through his senior year, to enroll in the Merchant Marine Cadet/Midshipman program at Coyote Point near San Mateo, California. He was 17.[[2]](#footnote-2) He was discharged early in 1946 and returned home with new self-confidence and a ticket to college, thanks to the GI Bill. He was eager to make his mark, perhaps as a professor or lawyer. He’d been giving some thought to the priesthood, too.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Former Fireman 1st Class Spellman, a history-political science major, was a star on the debate team within three months of matriculation at Seattle University.[[4]](#footnote-4) He went on to become valedictorian for the Class of 1949 at Seattle University, then spent nine months at a Jesuit seminary before deciding to attend law school at Georgetown University. He was a member of Georgetown’s national-champion moot court team in 1952.[[5]](#footnote-5) Mr. Spellman graduated in the top 10 percent of the Class of 1953, and was admitted to the Washington State Bar on September 25.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Professional Career. Mr. Spellman practiced maritime and labor law in Seattle for the next decade.[[7]](#footnote-7) He practiced law with Joseph Sylvester Kane – a civil rights activist who had worked for the ACLU. He eventually became Mr. Kane’s law partner.[[8]](#footnote-8) Mr. Kane and Mr. Spellman developed a thriving practice. Mr. Spellman’s top clients were the unions. He represented the Steelworkers, Ironworkers and Communications Workers, as well as the Butchers & Meat Cutters, the Bakers, Transportation Workers and the National Maritime Union.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Political Career. After an unsuccessful run for mayor of Seattle in 1964, he won a seat on the King County Commission in 1966. He was a key backer of the county’s change to a charter government, done to address ineffectiveness, corruption and cronyism, and was elected to be the first King County executive in 1969 and was twice re-elected. Land-use planning, farmland preservation and reforms in the criminal justice system were among Mr. Spellman’s priorities in King County.[[10]](#footnote-10)

His first run for governor was in 1976, when he lost to Dixy Lee Ray, the state’s first female governor.[[11]](#footnote-11) Mr. Spellman was elected governor in 1980. He served just one term as governor, losing to Booth Gardner in 1984.[[12]](#footnote-12) Some of his accomplishments are mentioned below.

* Helped to secure Major-League Baseball and National Football League franchises for Seattle;
* Constructed King County multi-purpose domed stadium, the Kingdome;
* Rejected Northern Tier application for Puget Sound pipeline;
* Preserved integrity of State Shoreline Management Act; and
* Initiated new trading opportunities with People’s Republic of China.[[13]](#footnote-13)

After leaving office in 1985, Gov. Spellman became a named partner in the Seattle law firm of Carney Badley Spellman.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Personal Life. Gov. Spellman and Ms. Lois Elizabeth Murphy were married on February 20, 1954, at Assumption Catholic Church in Seattle.[[15]](#footnote-15) Gov. Spellman and Ms. Murphy met while attending Seattle University. The Spellmans’ daughter Margo was born on their first anniversary. The Spellmans’ later had five additional children: Bart, David, Jeff, Teresa, and Katherine.

Gov. Spellman passed away on January 16, 2018, at age 91.[[16]](#footnote-16) His wife of 63 years, Lois passed away nine days later at age 90.[[17]](#footnote-17)

**ANALYSIS**

Proposed Ordinance 2018-0321 would name the King County Administration Building located at the 500 Fourth Avenue block in Seattle, Washington and any other buildings that reside on this block to the John Spellman Block and Memorial Building. The proposed ordinance would also name the 500 Fourth Avenue block as the John Spellman Block and Memorial Building.

Council’s legal counsel review of the proposed ordinance is ongoing.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed Ordinance 2018-0321

**INVITED**

1. Dow Constantine, County Executive, Executive’s Office
1. Hughes, John C. *John Spellman: Politics Never Broke His Heart*. Thomson-Shore, January 2013. Web. July 22, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hughes, John C. *John Spellman: Politics Never Broke His Heart.* Thomson-Shore, January 2013. Web. July 22, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Hughes, John C. *John Spellman: Politics Never Broke His Heart.* Thomson-Shore, January 2013. Web. July 22, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Hughes, John C. *John Spellman: Politics Never Broke His Heart.* Thomson-Shore, January 2013. Web. July 22, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Washington State Secretary of State Legacy Washington. Accessed on July 22, 2018. <https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/stories/john-spellman/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Washington State Secretary of State Legacy Washington. Accessed on July 22, 2018. <https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/stories/john-spellman/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Washington State Secretary of State Legacy Washington. Accessed on July 22, 2018. <https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/stories/john-spellman/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Hughes, John C. *John Spellman: Politics Never Broke His Heart.* Thomson-Shore, January 2013. Web. July 22, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Hughes, John C. *John Spellman: Politics Never Broke His Heart.* Thomson-Shore, January 2013. Web. July 22, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Brunner, Jim and Jack Broom. “Former Washington governor, King County executive John Spellman dies.” The Seattle Times January 16, 2018. Web. July 22, 2018.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/former-washington-governor-king-county-executive-john-spellman-dies/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Brunner, Jim and Jack Broom. “Former Washington governor, King County executive John Spellman dies.” The Seattle Times January 16, 2018. Web. July 22, 2018.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/former-washington-governor-king-county-executive-john-spellman-dies/> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. McNamara, Neal. “John Spellman, Governor And King County Executive, Dies At 91.” Seattle Patch January 16, 2018. Web. July 22, 2018.

<https://patch.com/washington/seattle/john-spellman-governor-king-county-executive-dies-91> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Washington State Secretary of State Legacy Washington. Accessed on July 22, 2018. <https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/stories/john-spellman/> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Brunner, Jim and Jack Broom. “Former Washington governor, King County executive John Spellman dies.” The Seattle Times January 16, 2018. Web. July 22, 2018.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/former-washington-governor-king-county-executive-john-spellman-dies/> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Hughes, John C. *John Spellman: Politics Never Broke His Heart.* Thomson-Shore, January 2013. Web. July 22, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Brunner, Jim and Jack Broom. “Former Washington governor, King County executive John Spellman dies.” The Seattle Times January 16, 2018. Web. July 22, 2018.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/former-washington-governor-king-county-executive-john-spellman-dies/> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Brunner, Jim. “Former Gov. John and Lois Spellman remembered at joint funeral Mass.: The Seattle Times February 12, 2018. Web. July 22, 2018.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/former-gov-john-and-lois-spellman-remembered-at-joint-funeral-mass/> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)