

Director Taylor,

Attached [below] is a letter detailing a proposal to the Board for a change of the name of Custer Stadium to the "Jimmy Banks Memorial Stadium".

Tim Clements

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL TO RENAME CUSTER STADIUM AND FIELD

Dear Director Taylor:

I am writing to you as the School Board Director representing Area #3, the region of the city that includes the Obama School of Career and Technical Education and the adjoining stadium, Custer Stadium. I make this respectful request not only on my personal behalf, but also with a united voice of the local soccer community to rename Custer Stadium the "Jimmy Banks Memorial Stadium". For added consideration, we would encourage the Board to designate the stadium's football/soccer field as the "Richard Williams Field".

Historically, MPS has established a precedent in the naming of a number of its athletic facilities and sporting events after distinguished alumni, coaches and contributors to the district. To cite a few examples:

- Hogan Field @ Herlevitch Diamond (baseball) at Hamilton High School
- Sijan Playfield (softball and baseball) near Bay View High School
- The Blackburn Division (football)
- The Terry Porter Classic (basketball)

A few highlights to get to know Mr. Banks:

Jimmy Banks was born in 1964 in the Westlawn Projects of Milwaukee's North side and was a 1982 graduate of Custer High School. In high school he played soccer with distinction and was honored as a high school NSCA All-American for his efforts. He was coached by tWisconsin Soccer Hall of Fame coach, Richard Williams.

After playing for two years at UW Parkside, Jimmy transferred to UW Milwaukee, where he distinguished himself with All-American honors. His playing career continued with the national champion Bavarian Soccer Club of Milwaukee and the professional indoor team, Milwaukee Wave. The crowning achievement of Jimmy's playing career was to be named to the starting lineup on the United States Mens' National Soccer Team and to start in all three games in the 1990 World Cup in Italy.

Still mindful of his neighborhood roots, Jimmy's degree enabled him to become the recreation director of the Sherman Park YMCA. About this same time, he founded the Simba Lions Soccer Club. The Simba legacy continues today under the banner of the Milwaukee Kickers. The club's purpose is to promote the game of soccer and all of its benefits (health, team-building, etc.) to the youth of Milwaukee's central city. Mr. Banks' son, Demetrius, coaches the Simbas to this day as well as assistant coach at Rufus King High School.

In 1999 Jimmy continued his soccer career as head coach of the men's team at Milwaukee School of Engineering, and won several conference championships in addition to making multiple appearances in the NCAA tournament. Jimmy held this position until his sad and untimely passing from cancer on April 26, 2019.

Mr. Richard Williams' distinguished career:

Born in Antigo in 1936, Richard Williams graduated from High School and served in the United States Army. Upon his graduation from college, Mr. Williams began a teaching career in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Coach Williams taught Social Studies at Custer high school and established the first varsity-level soccer program in the City Conference in 1969. Following that milestone, Richard was instrumental in organizing the state's first public school high school soccer league. In 1974, Coach Williams arranged for the first high school (public school) invitational state tournament which he hosted on Custer's campus and in the stadium. Following the implementation of Title 9, in 1980, Richard began the first girls varsity soccer program in the Milwaukee area. Along the way, Richard was able to earn a USSF "A" coaching license and became an assessor. This made Coach Williams the first Wisconsin born individual to do so. Beginning in 1990, one of the two divisions of the boy's and girl's soccer divisions of the City Conference were named in his honor. Working with the Wisconsin Masons, Richard was able to establish the Wisconsin High School All-Star games for Boy's and Girls senior players in 1992. In 2009 "Dick" was selected to the Wisconsin Soccer Association Hall of Fame. After dedicating a lifetime of service to his country, City, the sport of soccer and to his school system, Richard died on April 15, 2019.

These proposed name changes will honor contemporary, deserving individuals for their contributions to the thousands of lives of Milwaukee children for which they had a direct and lasting impact. Not only would the proposed name changes positively impact MPS, but it will remove an undesirable connotation to the facility by Milwaukee's Native Americans.

This is an opportunity for the Board to shine a light on the achievements of our homegrown greats who have promoted the values espoused by coaches and educators alike. I would personally be filled with joy to see the profile of high school soccer raised to a level of recognition it deserves.

I stand ready to meet or talk with you individually or the entire Board to promote this very worthwhile endeavor. I am a retired MPS teacher, former MPS athletic director, and 20-year soccer coach at MPS.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Clements

“the unofficial voice” of South Stadium Soccer