



CITY OF HAMMOND ORDINANCE

No. _____ C. .S.

An Ordinance to Name the Courtroom in the Leon Ford III Memorial Justice Building in honor of Judge Grace Bennett Gasaway

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WHEREAS, Grace Elizabeth Bennett Gasaway (1961–2021) was a respected Louisiana jurist, civic leader, and longtime Judge of the City Court of Hammond, known for her compassion, intellect, and commitment to juvenile justice, who served her community for more than two decades; and

WHEREAS, Judge Gasaway was born on June 16, 1961 and raised in Hammond, and graduated with honors from Hammond High School before attending Southeastern Louisiana University. She later earned a degree in political science from Louisiana State University and received her Juris Doctorate from the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center; and

WHEREAS, In 1996, Judge Gasaway was elected Judge of the City Court of Hammond, where she became widely recognized not only for her fairness and dedication to juvenile justice, but also for modernizing court operations well ahead of many courts across the state. Under her leadership, the City Court of Hammond instituted paperless court systems and implemented more accessible, user-friendly court services making the legal process easier for the public to navigate; and

WHEREAS, Judge Gasaway championed rehabilitative programs and community-based services designed to give young offenders opportunities for guidance and recovery rather than punishment alone. Her work earned admiration throughout Louisiana’s legal community; and

WHEREAS, Judge Gasaway was active and served in numerous legal and judicial organizations, including the 21st Judicial District Bar Association, the Louisiana State Bar Association, the Louisiana State Law Institute, the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. She was also appointed by the Louisiana Supreme Court to serve on the Judicial Council of the State of Louisiana and the Judicial Compensation Commission; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her career, Judge Gasway received several honors, including the Annie Award, Woman of the Year in Governmental Excellence, and the Crystal Gavel Award presented by the Louisiana State Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, Beyond the courtroom, Judge Gasaway was a founding member and first president of the Richard Murphy Hospice Foundation, reflecting her lifelong commitment to service and compassion; and

WHEREAS, Judge Gasaway passed away on June 17, 2021, at the age of 60. She is remembered by family, colleagues, friends, and community members as a fair-minded judge, dedicated public servant, and a gracious presence whose influence extended far beyond the Courtroom; and

WHEREAS, the life of Grace Elizabeth Bennett Gasaway should be honored and memorialized by the naming of the courtroom in the Leon Ford III Memorial Justice Building in her memory.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the Hammond City Council that:

1. The Courtroom in the Leon Ford III Memorial Justice Building shall be named in honor of Judge Grace Bennett Gasaway.

The above and foregoing ordinance having being duly submitted to the Hammond City Council in writing; introduced at a public meeting on _____, 2026 of the Hammond City Council and discussed at a public meeting held on _____, 2026.

On a motion by _____ and second by _____ the foregoing ordinance was hereby declared adopted on _____ by the following roll call vote:

VOTE: Kip Andrews (), Carlee White Gonzales (), Sam DiVittorio (), Steve Leon () Devon Wells (). Motion _____

WHEREFORE the above and foregoing ordinance was declared duly adopted on this _____ day of _____, 2026 at Hammond, Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana.

Kip Andrews President,
Hammond City Council

Honorable Pete Panepinto, Mayor

Lisa Cockerham, Clerk Hammond City Council