



October 9, 2016

Councilman David James  
Metro Council District 6  
601 W. Jefferson St.  
Louisville, KY 40202

Dear Councilman James:

The Belgravia Court Association appreciates all the work you do to support our community and to make our neighborhoods better places to live. I'm writing on behalf of the association to ask for your help to have the portion of the alley that passes through the first and second quadrants of Belgravia Court (between 4th St. and St. James Ct.) named for J. Douglas Nunn.

I am including a biographical sketch of J. Douglas Nunn with this letter that we prepared when we observed the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary (2012) of the restoration of Belgravia Court. Doug Nunn led a community effort to preserve what later became Old Louisville. The signature project for that effort was on Belgravia in 1962. We believe that it would be a fitting way to honor Doug and to memorialize the restoration work that he led in Old Louisville.

Thank you for your help with this request. If there are questions about Doug Nunn or about our request, please direct them to Bruce Keisling ([blkeisling@gmail.com](mailto:blkeisling@gmail.com)) who is assisting me on this project.

Best regards,

Michael Kuhl  
President, Belgravia Court Association

Enc: J. Douglas Nunn Naming Recommendation

The J. Douglas Nunn Alley Naming Recommendation  
October 9, 2016



“I have become convinced that unless some very positive action is taken—and taken soon— this community is going to muff the great opportunity it has right now to restore or rehabilitate the old “mansion” area south of Broadway. Talk about “bringing back” this area has been going on for years. Most everyone interested is certain it can be done. There are ideas galore. But unless steps are taken to organize interested groups, individuals and their ideas into a unified, concerted drive we are going to end up with nothing more than talk. My purpose in writing this memo is to suggest some ideas that might help convert talk into action.”

Memo from Doug Nunn to Mr. Bingham, 18 May 1961  
(Doug Nunn Papers, UofL Archives), Photo, CJ

The revitalization of Old Louisville and Belgravia Court could have ended in mere talk, rather than the signature project of the revitalization of downtown Louisville, had it not been for the drive and commitment of Doug Nunn. Though the downtown restoration effort of the 1960's included a roster of supporters committing good will, financial support and professional expertise, it was Doug Nunn's passion and leadership that led to the formation of the Old Louisville Association and the launch of the parallel group Restoration Inc., which began the revitalization of Belgravia Court in 1962. For his singular influence on, and contribution to, what Belgravia Court is today, the Anniversary Committee recommends that the alley between the first and second quadrants be named in his honor.

J. Douglas Nunn was a native of Wichita, Kansas where he began a career as a newspaper reporter. He moved to Louisville in 1941 to work for the Courier Journal and except for time served in the Navy, Nunn was a city hall reporter through 1948. In 1948 he became a special writer-editor for community development affairs and local government. He was well informed about Louisville's growing problems with urban blight and with those same problems in other major US cities. With the support of Barry Bingham he used his articles to encourage action from city leaders.

Nunn observed with dismay the increasing loss of historically important architecture. His concerns were shared by people such as the Bingham and Browns whose families had historical connections to family homes in present day Old Louisville. As Nunn researched the issue, he gathered information about preservation efforts in places like Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and Boston. He recognized that Louisville had concentrations of period homes and architecture that were worthy of saving and that if saved could enhance the image and prestige of the city.

Following the memo he wrote to Barry Bingham quoted above, talk turned into action. Bingham gave Nunn a leave of absence from the CJ to coordinate founding the Old Louisville Association. They held their organizational meeting on June 20, 1961. Nunn also

launched several parallel efforts to encourage preservation, but one of his chief aims was to identify a model project to demonstrate how modern life could be comfortably adapted to historic homes. With financial support from investors like the Bingham and Browns, Restoration Inc. was formed in the spring of 1962 to purchase nine homes in the western sections of Belgravia Court. The project was a financial loss, and some houses were sold with incomplete renovations, but Belgravia had been transformed.

Nunn's work for advancing city interests and preserving Louisville's heritage did not end with Old Louisville. His work included supporting the founding of Shakespeare in the Park, purchasing and restoring the Belle of Louisville, and preserving the Brown Theatre.

Nunn, like many, cared about preserving Louisville's cultural assets, but he was uniquely informed, connected and respected in the city to ensure that it amounted to more than mere sentiment. In view of his contributions to the city and in particular to Belgravia Court and Old Louisville, we recommend that the alley between the first and second quadrants be named in his honor.