



REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Joan Walls, City Manager

DATE: March 7, 2025

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR HONORARY STREET NAME: PATRICIA
AVERY-NEAL – SS 2025–007**

A. Introduction: The City received a request to designate an honorary street for Patricia Avery-Neal. The purpose of this report is to provide information about this request and seek Council direction.

B. Recommended Action: The Administration seeks Council direction on preparing a Resolution for an honorary street designation for Patricia Avery-Neal, designating Walnut Street between North Street and Columbia Avenue as Honorary Patricia Avery-Neal Way.

C. Prior Council Action:

- CB 2000-077 – On April 4, 2000, Council approved a Resolution Establishing a Council Policy for Honorary Street Name Designation and Codifying Such Policy.
- CB 2001-079 – On April 17, 2001, Council approved a Resolution Amending Council Bill 2000-077 Regarding the Council Policy for Honorary Street Name Designation and Codifying Such Policy.
- [SS 2013-063](#) – On November 12, 2013, staff reviewed and obtained Council input during a Study Session on proposed changes to the City’s Honorary Street Name Designation Policy.
- [CB 2014-009](#) – On January 21, 2014, repealed CB 2000-077 and CB 2001-079 and adopted a revised City Policy for honorary street name designations.
- [CB 2018-123](#) – On August 7, 2018, Council approved a Resolution Amending the Council Policy for Honorary Street Name Designation to recognize City employees who lose their lives in the line of duty.

D. Background:

1. Program Summary. The City of Champaign established the Honorary Street Name Program in 2000 to honor individuals, organizations, entities, and events that either had significant lineage to the City or had a significant cultural, historical, or humanitarian impact on the City. Honorary street designations have a geographical relationship to the honoree (i.e., the honoree lived or worked at the designated location). Honorary street designations last for 10 years and are not eligible for renewal. Honorary street designations for any City employee who loses their life in the line of duty shall be for an indefinite term.

2. Honorary Street Name Designation Policy. The Honorary Street Name Designation Policy as adopted by City Council (CB 2014-009, January 21, 2014) and amended (CB 2018-123, August 7, 2018) is listed below. Policy item (b) explains what the applicant is required to do for a nomination. Policy items (a) and (c), plus items (h) through (l), are criteria staff use to evaluate the adequacy of an application. Policy items (d) through (g) describe Council's role in the designation policy.

- a. Criteria required for an honorary street name designation:
 - Honorary street name designations should be limited to individuals, organizations, entities, and events that either had a significant lineage to the City or had a significant cultural, historical, or humanitarian impact on the City.
 - The requested location for the honorary street designation must have a geographical relationship to the honoree, i.e., honoree lived or worked at the location requested for recognition.
- b. Individuals or groups wishing to propose an honorary street name designation will complete the application form and submit it to the Public Works Department for review. Individual letters of support are encouraged and should be attached to the application.
- c. If the application is complete, Public Works will forward the application to Council for review.
- d. If there is sufficient support within Council (five members) for the request, the request will be forwarded to the City Manager to schedule for a Study Session.
- e. The Public Works Department will prepare a Report to Council for the Study Session honorary street request.
- f. If the Study Session poll indicates a simple majority support for the honorary street request, Public Works will prepare a Council Bill for the designation.
- g. Upon final Council approval, the Public Works Department will implement the honorary street name designation.
- h. The honorary street name designation will be for 10 years and will not be eligible for renewal.
- i. Honorary designations shall be limited to one block in length. In addition to the signs required at the designation location, up to four commemorative signs shall be provided for each designation.
- j. There shall be only one honorary designation per location.
- k. Honorary designations shall be limited to four per year.
- l. Honorary street names for any City employee who lost their life in the line of duty shall be assigned to such blocks as designated by the City Council. Such designation shall be for an indefinite term and not be counted against the limitation of four designations per year.

3. Review of Application. This is the first honorary street application received in 2025. Aaron Neal submitted an electronic honorary street application to the Public Works Department to honor Patricia Avery-Neal on January 4, 2025. Staff reviewed the application and requested clarification from Mr. Neal on the exact location of the request. Mr. Neal provided an updated designation location of Walnut Street between North Street and Columbia Avenue. Mrs. Avery-Neal and her siblings spent a lot of time on this block. During Mrs. Avery-Neal's youth, her great-grandfather lived at the corner of Walnut Street and North Street. Mrs. Avery-Neal

returned to this block and lived on the corner of Walnut Street and Columbia Avenue when her children were young.

The application for this honorary street designation is attached (Attachment A). Public Works staff has reviewed the application packet and has deemed it complete. A majority of City Council supported scheduling this item for Council consideration at a Study Session.

4. Next Steps. The requested Study Session for the honorary street name designation for the application described in Section 3 has been added to the March 11, 2025, Study Session Agenda. If the Study Session poll for this agenda item indicates support by at least five Council Members, Public Works will prepare a Council Bill that will be scheduled for consideration at a Regular City Council Meeting. If the City Council approves the Resolution, the Public Works Department will install the honorary street name designations at the approved locations.

Council is considering one honorary street designation at this Council Study Session. Per Council Policy, honorary designations are limited to four per year and a term of 10 years, excluding honorary street designations for City employees who lose their lives in the line of duty which are indefinite designations. Depending on the outcome of the Council poll for the designation considered at this Study Session, this may be the first application approved in 2025.

E. Alternatives:

1. Direct staff to prepare a Resolution to be placed on a Regular Meeting Agenda for Council action on the honorary street designation for Patricia Avery-Neal on Walnut Street between North Street and Columbia Avenue.
2. Do not direct staff to prepare a Resolution and provide other direction.

F. Discussion of Alternatives:

Alternative 1 would direct staff to prepare a Resolution to be placed on a Regular Meeting Agenda for Council action on the honorary street designation for Patricia Avery-Neal on Walnut Street between North Street and Columbia Avenue.

a. Advantages

- The honorary designation generates neighborhood and community identification.
- The honorary designation provides recognition for an individual who made significant contributions to the community.

b. Disadvantages

- Cost of implementing the request, although minimal, reduces the amount of funds available for the Annual Sign Replacement Program.

Alternative 2 would not direct staff to prepare the Resolution.

a. Advantages

- Provides an opportunity for Council input.
- The cost of implementation may be avoided.

b. Disadvantages

- The individual would not be recognized in this manner.

G. Community Input: Members of the public will have an opportunity to provide input for the designation at the Council Study Session.

The Honorary Street Designation portion of the City's website can be found under the City's History Page, listed with historic landmarks and other artifacts. This page provides visitors with a listing of all honorary designations, both active and retired, along with an interactive map. Visitors may apply for a designation and learn more about each designation, with a drop-down that contains information about each honoree, along with a link to the Council Bill and Report to Council designating each honorary street. You can view the page at champaignil.gov/honorarystreet.

H. Budget Impact: Staff estimates the cost for an honorary street designation at \$1,000 per block. The estimate is based on a street sign at each end of the block and four commemorative signs. This estimate includes all labor and materials to review the honorary street application, preparation of the Reports to Council, and sign construction and installation.

I. Staffing Impact: Staff time to complete a typical honorary street designation is 11 hours. This includes all staff time to review the honorary street application, preparation of the Reports to Council, and sign construction and installation.

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Jamie Vermillion
Project Specialist

Terry Lusby, Jr.
Public Works Director

Attachment: Attachment A – Honorary Street Program Application Form – Patricia Avery-Neal

Outlook

Fw: New submission from Honorary Street Designation Application

From PublicWorks <PublicWorks@champaignil.gov>

Date Sun 1/5/2025 12:12 PM

To Jamie Vermillion <Jamie.Vermillion@champaignil.gov>

1 attachment (250 KB)

mom4.jpg;

sending your way

Best regards,

City of Champaign Public Works - Parking
702 Edgebrook Drive
Champaign, IL 61820
217-403-4700

From: webmaster@champaignil.gov <webmaster@champaignil.gov>

Sent: Saturday, January 4, 2025 12:07 AM

To: PublicWorks <PublicWorks@champaignil.gov>

Subject: New submission from Honorary Street Designation Application

Applicant Information**Applicant Name**

Aaron Neal

Organization/Company

Son of Patricia Avery - Neal

Address

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Honorary Street Name Request

Name of Honoree

Patricia Avery-Neal

Location

N. Walnut St./ Bradley Ave/ Maplewood Dr and Kenwood Rd

Intersecting streets at end of the one-block length:

N. Walnut and E Columbia Ave (Alternatively - N. Neil St and E. Beardsley Ave)

Requested Street Name

Honorary Patricia Avery - Neal Way

Number of Commemorative Signs Requested if Approved

4

Criteria**Cultural Impact on the City**

Patricia Avery-Neal's role as a transformational leader in public service and community advocacy extends across various initiatives that have left a lasting cultural mark on Champaign. As Executive Director of the Champaign Urbana Area Project (CUAP), Patricia launched programs like the Mentoring Young Sisters Program and the CUperStar Performing Arts and Enrichment Program, which empowered young women and showcased the talents of over 100 youth in the community. Through her work, Patricia fostered an environment of inclusion and enrichment, shaping the cultural fabric of Champaign by supporting youth and promoting racial and social justice. Additionally, her leadership in community organizing continues to inspire the next generation of leaders.

Historical Impact on the City

Patricia Avery-Neal made history as the first African American woman appointed or elected to a county office in Champaign, serving as the Recorder of Deeds in 1996. In 2000, she was elected to the Champaign County Board, where she became the first Democrat, African American, and woman to hold the position of Chair of the Champaign County Board, breaking significant barriers and fostering diversity in local government. Her tenure not only paved the way for future leaders but also advanced the causes of equity and representation within the city's political landscape. The House Resolution and proclamations further validate Patricia's pioneering achievements, showing how her leadership contributed to historical milestones in local governance.

Humanitarian Impact on the City

Patricia's dedication to social justice and community safety is further exemplified by her founding of TRUCE, a gun violence deterrence program modeled after the Ceasefire Public Health Cure Violence Model. Her advocacy efforts also earned her notable accolades, such as the NAACP Distinguished Community Service Award and the Phenomenal Woman of Worth Award, demonstrating her long-standing commitment to humanitarian causes. Patricia's work in gun violence prevention and her contributions to addressing racial injustices are not only widely recognized but have had a profound and lasting impact on the city. Her activism in police reform and racial justice, as reflected in the photos and articles, further showcases her unwavering commitment to the community.

Significant Lineage to the City

A lifelong resident of Champaign, Patricia Avery-Neal has spent her life dedicated to public service, social advocacy, and leadership roles that have had a direct impact on her hometown. From serving as the president of the Champaign County NAACP to her involvement on numerous boards and commissions, including the YWCA, Rape Crisis Center,

and Champaign City Zoning Board, Patricia's deep commitment to improving the lives of Champaign's residents reflects her enduring legacy. The proclamation of Patricia Avery Day by the mayors of Champaign and Urbana recognizes her contributions to the city and the community's ongoing appreciation for her work.

Geographic Location

The requested honorary street designation reflects Patricia Avery-Neal's lifelong service and direct impact on the people and communities of Champaign County. The chosen street is situated near areas where Patricia has dedicated much of her life's work, symbolizing her commitment to public service and community empowerment. Naming this street in her honor is a fitting tribute to her leadership and dedication to enhancing the city's social and cultural landscape.

Additional Information

Attach Supporting Documents/Files

[mom4.jpg](#)

Outlook

Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: New submission from Honorary Street Designation Application

From Aaron Neal <[REDACTED]>

Date Mon 1/27/2025 9:33 PM

To Jamie Vermillion <Jamie.Vermillion@champaignil.gov>

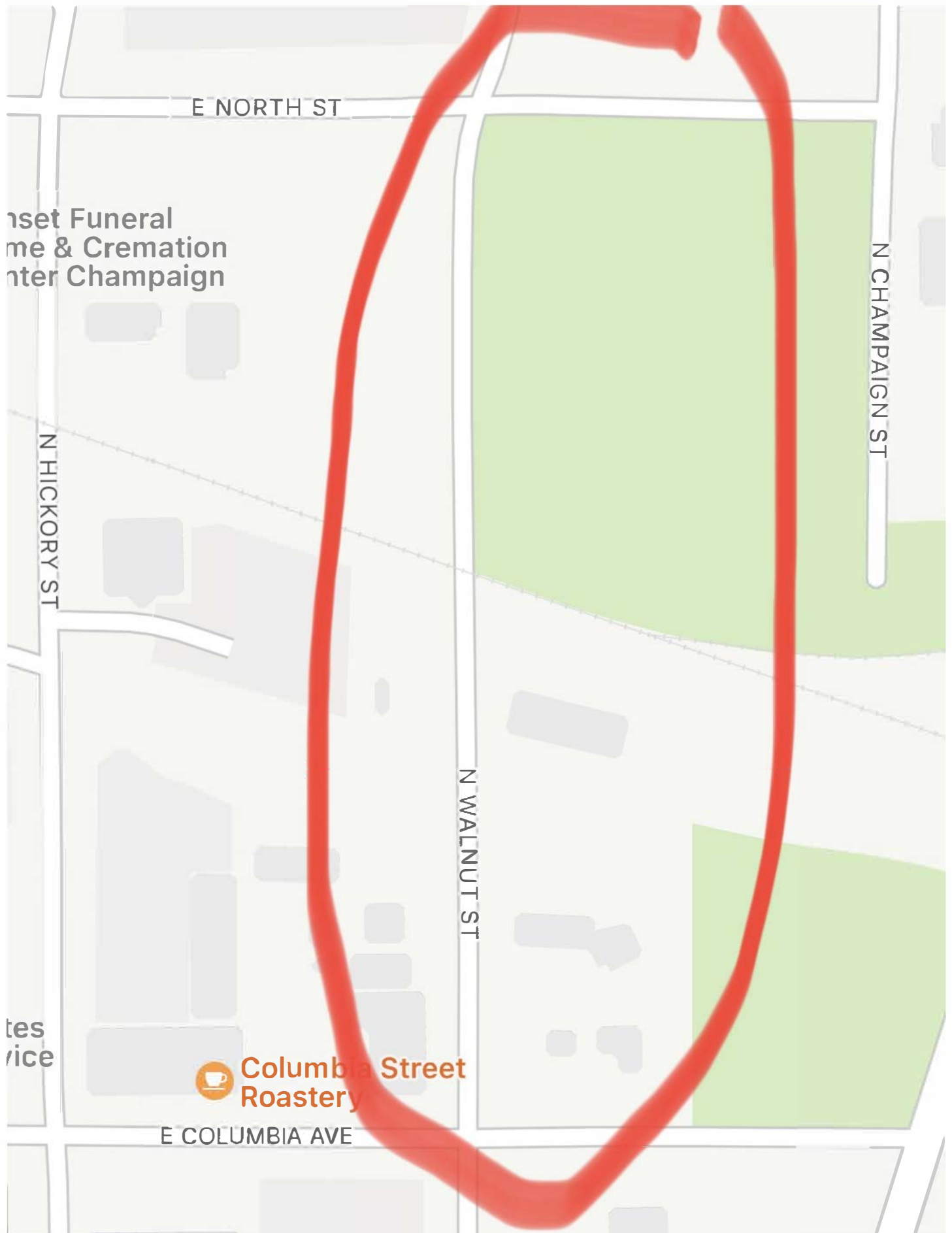
[EXTERNAL]

Hi Jamie.

Forgive me for the confusion. Please see attached photo of the desired location. This is the block between E North St and E Columbia Ave on Walnut St. This block is where my Mother and siblings spent a lot of their time. My Great Grandfather lived on the corner of Walnut and North St. We, (Mom, Dad and my siblings) lived on the corner of Walnut and E Columbia for a couple of years when I was about 5yrs old.

I have found memories of our time on that block. Beardsley Park was within walking distance and we would play there almost everyday it seemed. =)

Let me know if there is anything else. Thank you!



Sent from my iPhone

Proclamation

By the Mayors of The Cities
Of Champaign and Urbana, Illinois

- WHEREAS,** Patricia Avery is a transformational leader whose life's work has been in public service, community organizing and advocacy; and
- WHEREAS,** In 1996, Patricia became the first African American woman appointed or elected to a County Office as the Recorder of Deeds, followed by County Board in 1998. In 2000, she was elected the first Democrat, the first African American, and the first woman, to serve as Chair of the Champaign County Board; and
- WHEREAS,** In 2006, she founded the CUperStar Performing Arts and Enrichment Program allowing over 100 young artists to showcase their talent at various venues across Champaign-Urbana; and
- WHEREAS,** Patricia has served on numerous boards: YWCA, Rape Crisis Center, Women in Transition, Black Chamber of Commerce, Tri County Economic Development Corp, City of Champaign Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals, as Champaign's representative on the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, member on the Unit 4 School District Community Engagement Committee, CU Fresh Start, Champaign Community Coalition, City of Urbana Traffic Stop Study Committee, and as a 2017 Everytown for Gun Sense Fellow; and
- WHEREAS,** From 2011 to 2017, Patricia was President of the Champaign County NAACP; and
- WHEREAS,** Patricia Avery has been the recipient of dozens of awards and honors, and she is most proud and humbled by the "Phenomenal Woman of Worth Award" received in 2017 from the International African Women in Leadership Organization, Diaspora Conference, that took place in Atlanta; and
- WHEREAS,** After 16 years as Executive Director of the Champaign-Urbana Area Project, Patricia Avery is retiring to spend more time with her husband, children and grandchildren, knowing that her heart will never be far from our community.
- NOW, THEREFORE, WE,** Deborah Frank Feinen, Mayor of the City of Champaign, and Diane Wolfe Marlin, Mayor of the City of Urbana, Illinois, do hereby proclaim August 22, 2019, as

Patricia Avery Day

In the Cities of Champaign
and Urbana, Illinois



In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands
Seals of the Cities of Champaign and Urbana, Illinois

9:28



ilga.gov

HR0521

LRB101 14365 ALS 63251 F

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois
House of
3 Representatives wish to congratulate Patricia
Avery on the
4 occasion of her retirement as the Executive
Director of the
5 Champaign-Urbana Area Project; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1996, Patricia Avery was the
first African
7 American woman appointed or elected to a
county office when she
8 was elected as the Recorder of Deeds; in
1998, she was elected
9 to the Champaign County Board; in 2000, she
was the first
10 Democrat, the first African American, and the
first woman to
11 serve as the Chair of the Champaign County
Board; and

12 WHEREAS, In 2006, Patricia Avery founded
the CUPerStar
13 Performing Arts and Enrichment Program, where
over 100 young
14 artists showcased their talents at various
venues across
15 Champaign-Urbana; and

16 WHEREAS, Patricia Avery has served on
many boards,
17 including the YWCA, the Rape Crisis Center,
Women in
18 Transition, the Black Chamber of Commerce,
the Tri-County
19 Economic Development Corp, and the City of
Champaign Planning
20 and Zoning Board of Appeals; she served as
Champaign's
21 representative on the Champaign County
Regional Planning
22 Commission; she was a member of the Unit 4
School District

HR0521

- 2 -

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1 ~~Community Engagement Committee~~ CU Fresh
Start the Champaign



 News-Gazette

[Visit](#)

Being Black in America: Patricia Avery |
People | news-gazette.com

2020-06-10 10:00:00



Patricia Avery

Provided

“There has been an



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Avery steps down as NAACP president to focus on campaign

By Debra Pressey dpressey@news-gazette.com

Sep 13, 2017 Updated Jun 27, 2019



Rick Danzl

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