



The Florida House of Representatives

Office of the Speaker

Chris Sprowls
Speaker

January 6, 2021

The Honorable Dave Eggers
Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street
Clearwater, FL 33756

Dear Chairman Eggers,

We write you today to formally request, pursuant to the County's building naming policy, that the *Pinellas County Justice Center* on 49th Street in Clearwater, often referred to as "the CJC," be renamed after our late State Attorney Bernie McCabe.

As you know, last week Mr. McCabe passed away after 48 years of service to the people of Pinellas and Pasco County. His passing marks the end of an illustrious career of service that dates back to 1972. In those 48 years, including 28 years as State Attorney, he left an unrivaled legacy in the pantheon of Florida justice seekers.

As a boss, friend, and mentor to thousands of lawyers over the years; a zealous advocate on behalf of victims and their families; and a warrior for the families of slain police officers, Bernie McCabe has left an indelible mark on the lives of so many.

Mr. McCabe's pursuit of justice in the halls of criminal courthouses in Pinellas and Pasco County would be enough to fill the volumes of libraries, but it was not enough to satisfy his desire to serve. He cared deeply for children and families. It is why for years, he served faithfully as a member of the Pinellas County Juvenile Welfare Board, as a board member for the YMCA of the Suncoast, and was the only State Attorney in Florida to seek to advocate on behalf of children in dependency cases.

That yearning to serve in new and innovative ways never dimmed, which is why he was one of the first State Attorney's in Florida to start a Drug Treatment Court to better serve the addicted and downtrodden, and why he was the first to create a Veterans Treatment Court. He could be fierce when he needed to be, but his heart was one in constant search of truth and righteousness.

Over the years, many people sought him out. Some came seeking justice, others mercy. Many came to seek his counsel on their careers or public policy. His advice was thoughtful, forward thinking, with a deep understanding of the past and an eye to the future. The loss of that counsel will leave a hole in our community and our state that will be tough to fill.

Whether it was as our elected State Attorney, through his service on boards including a lengthy term as Chairman of Florida's Violent Crime and Drug Control Council, as past president of the Florida Prosecutor's Association, and on the transition team of numerous Florida Attorney Generals, Mr. McCabe's legacy extends far beyond the borders of the Sixth Circuit. But we get to claim him as our own, and that is our unique distinction.

Mr. McCabe was fond of asking his young prosecutors when they asked him what they should do on a case, "What is the right thing to do?" He had a way of making complex decisions easy with keen moral clarity.

It is hard to honor the legacy of someone who has done so much for so long. The naming of a building does not do that, only the good deeds of those whose lives he impacted can truly steward his legacy. But naming the building that he walked into everyday to serve as a minister of justice, well...it's the right thing to do. We hope you will.

Sincerely,



Chris Sprowls, Speaker, Florida House of Representatives



Bruce L. Bartlett, Acting State Attorney, Sixth Judicial Circuit



Bob Gualtieri, Pinellas County Sheriff



Ken Burke, Pinellas County Clerk of Circuit Court and Comptroller



Anthony Rondolino, Chief Judge, Sixth Judicial Circuit

cc: Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners
Barry A. Burton, Pinellas County Administrator