



Application for Naming a Park Facility or Park

Please follow the instructions below when applying for the naming or renaming a facility or property.

1. Complete the application by providing detailed information about the park facility or park to be named or renamed. Please include any supplemental information such as articles, letters of support and signature list with the application. The application must contain documentation of public support for the proposed name. Public support materials must be provided to the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. Please provide payment of the Application Fee, \$365.00 in the form of a cashier's check. Checks should be made out to City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department and submitted with the application.
3. A Sign Fabrication Fee in the amount of \$940.00 will apply, should City Council approve the application. A cashier's check should be made out to City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department.
4. Send all submittals to:
Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR), Attn: Christine Chute Canul,
919 W 28th 1/2 St. Austin, TX 78705
5. Questions may be directed to Christine Chute Canul via email:
christine.canul@austintexas.gov or by phone: (512) 974-9515

Current Name of Park Facility or Park:

Bathhouse at Barton Springs Pool (no official name)

Nominated Name for the Park Facility or Park:

Joan Means Khabele Bathhouse at Barton Springs Pool

Identify Type of Park Facility to be named or renamed:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pool Complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sports Complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trail
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation Center	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural Center	<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior Center	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other Significant Building

If other is selected, please specify:

Bathhouse at Barton Springs Pool

If renaming a Park Facility, it must be initiated by the City Council, City Manager, PARD Director, or Community member(s) / group(s). Please provide documentation stating such initiation and indicate who initiated the renaming:

City Council (Name):

City Manager (Name):

PARD Director (Name):

Community Member(s) / Group(s):

If nominating the name of an individual, include a biographical description of nominee (if the nomination is not an individual's name, justification for the suggested name):

Describe how the individual has provided a valuable contribution and creditable service to the park system and the city (include the person's involvement, and connection, if any, to the Park Facility or to the activity for which the park facility will or is being used):

Joan Means Khabele's courageous leadership when she was a teenager to protest segregation at Barton Springs Pool sparked the civil rights era swim-ins that eventually led to the desegregation of Barton Springs Pool. She organized classmates to sign petitions and led a protest at an Austin City Council meeting. She led the first swim-in at Barton Springs Pool during her senior class picnic held at Zilker Park. Joan organized multiple swim-ins where Austin High School students were joined by students from Huston-Tillotson University, The University of Texas at Austin and St Edwards University in protest of segregation leading to the desegregation of Barton Springs Pool.

If the basis of the nomination is a culturally significant contribution, provide a description of the cultural, geographic, or historic significance to the surrounding area or community in which the facility exists:

Barton Springs Pool is the soul of Austin. The crown jewel of our city. It is the gathering place for people from all over Austin and around the world. A true oasis of history, nature, and recreation located in the very heart of Austin. When people think of Austin, they think of Barton Springs. When people visit Barton Springs, they walk through the gates and you can hear them exhale sighs of wonder, "it's so beautiful". They are not just talking about the natural beauty of the pool, they see it is a wonderful gathering place that welcomes everyone from all walks of life. It is where we as a community come together to enjoy life with our families, friends and loved ones.

Joan Means Khabele's vision, leadership skills and courage to make her vision a reality made Barton Springs Pool what it is today. We owe it to her memory, and to everyone who enters the bathhouse, to recognize her significant contributions to the City of Austin.

Is the individual or entity deeding the land to the City for a park facility? Yes No

Is the individual or entity contributing the estimated cost of at least 50% of the development of the Park Facility and providing an endowment for the estimated 20-year maintenance costs of the Park Facility as estimated by the PARD director? Yes No

Name of requester:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email:

Naming the Barton Springs Pool Bathhouse for Joan Means Khabele

The proposal to recognize Joan Means Khabele by gracing the bathhouse at Barton Springs Pool with her name carries an extraordinary potential to inspire. Joan's youthful valor, marked by her resolute stand against segregation, sparked a movement that rippled through the civil rights era. Her tenacity not only reshaped the heart of our city but also paved the way for the desegregation of Barton Springs Pool—making it a place of joy for all and a beacon of change, inclusivity and unity for our community.

The bathhouse at Barton Springs Pool should be named to honor Joan Means Khabele because her courageous leadership when she was a teenager to protest segregation at the pool sparked the civil rights era swim-ins that eventually led to the desegregation of Barton Springs Pool. Her actions touched the hearts of the city, changed our city's values and led to the desegregation of the pool.

Joan was born October 22, 1942 at Holy Cross Hospital in east Austin. She attended Blackshear Elementary School and Kealing Junior High. She was among the third group of students to integrate Austin High School in the late 1950s. In her senior year, after not being allowed to swim at her high school senior picnic, she was the first Black person to jump into Barton Springs Pool in an act of civil disobedience. In doing so, she sparked a movement of swim-ins that took place on a weekly basis throughout the summer of 1960.

Joan opposed segregationist policies forbidding black Austinites from swimming in Barton Springs Pool. She organized her classmates to sign petitions and led a protest at an Austin City Council meeting. She led the first swim-in at Barton Springs Pool during her senior class picnic held at Zilker Park. Joan organized multiple swim-ins where Austin High School students were joined by students from Huston-Tillotson University, The University of Texas at Austin and St Edwards University in protest of segregation leading to the desegregation at Barton Springs Pool and Zilker Park years before passage of the 1964 federal civil rights laws.

The City of Austin proclaimed April 9, 2022 as Joan Means Khabele Day in the City of Austin and held a ceremony to honor her at Barton Springs Pool attended by the Mayor of Austin, several City Council Members, members of Joan's family, as well as many other community members excited to recognize Joan and her valuable contribution to making Barton Springs a place of beauty open for all Austinites and visitors from around the world to enjoy.

Joan's activism began in the 1950s when she was among the third group of students to integrate Austin High. She remained active in the civil rights movement after graduating from the elite University of Chicago and she later earned a master's degree in African Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles.

After tutoring kids in Chicago, Joan joined the Peace Corps and moved to Ethiopia. After her return to the US, she met her husband, Dr. Paseka Edwin Khabele, who is from South Africa, while he was earning his doctorate at Fordham University in New York City.

Joan founded the African Studies departments at the national universities of Zambia, Botswana, and Lesotho, and her influence in African universities extended as far north as Nigeria. She remained active through her life in leadership roles for nonprofits in the U.S. and Africa.

She was a consummate classical pianist, sang in the National Opera of Lesotho and in the choir of St. James' Episcopal Church in Austin. She played on the national tennis team of Lesotho, was an avid gardener and art collector, and supported countless children with their educations in Lesotho and South Africa.

Joan and her husband had three children — Dineo, Inonge and the late Letsie “Khotso” Khabele, the founder of Austin's Khabele School — and eight grandchildren.

An educator, activist, musician and avid traveler, Joan was an active member of the Town Lake Chapter of the Links Inc. and served on the boards of the Austin-Maseru Sister Cities Committee, St. Stephen's Episcopal School and the Khabele School (now Headwaters), which was founded by her late son Khotso Khabele.

Joan Means Khabele died in October 2021. She was 78.

Let's hear from Joan in her own words. In an interview with Austin PBS in 2014, Joan spoke about her successful effort to desegregate Barton Springs Pool:

“Barton Springs was a special place because it's freshwater, it's in a beautiful setting. The Park itself was superior. We knew about it, but we knew that we could not go into that water. Period. Historically, Black people were there and they used to swim there. They might've even washed their clothes there for all we know, but then segregation, the Jim Crow era, brought in rules that, “This is for whites only.” There was no park in Austin that we could go to other than Rosewood Park. There was no pool we could swim in other than Rosewood Park pool.

So it was segregated, but then all of that changed with the school integration decision, the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954. And Austin decided to go as slowly as possible by starting with the 12th Grade.

Integration came for me in '57 when I left Kealing Junior High and went to Austin High. We were scared to death. We were scared to death because our first day of school was the day after Little Rock and Little Rock really hit the news because Governor Faubus got troops out and, you know, didn't let the Black kids in. And the white parents were shouting at the Black kids, and throwing things at them, and threatening violence, and that was terrible. So the very next day, I came to Austin High.

I had been valedictorian at Kealing, come from my father's a professor at Huston-Tillotson. My mom's an educator, later became a supervisor in the independent school district. So we had a very middle class background. And so I felt, if I'm going to a different school, I should take advantage of everything. So I was known because I joined everything and there were a lot of incidents where horrible things happened because I joined them.

The principal saw me as a sort of leader of the 8 Black kids in my class. He called me in in the spring of 1960 and said, "I see you as a leader of the kids in your class, and I want you to go back to them and tell them that I'm very sorry, but you cannot attend the senior picnic." And everybody had been looking forward to the senior picnic and for eons, that's where Austin had their senior picnics. They had their senior picnics at Zilker Park and swam at Barton Springs. So this was a custom. Now, we had been here for three years. I was upset. I cried. You know, I walked out because he said, "It's the law." These are Jim Crow laws. Nothing he can do about the law. And so I went out and cried and told my friends, "Ah, we're not supposed to go to the senior picnic."

And then started organizing after that and fortunately, I wasn't really thinking about it at the time, but fortunately I brought in some 11th graders, which means once I went off to the University of Chicago, there are still people who can carry on if we failed to open up Barton Springs and Zilker Park.

So what we did was got parents to sign petitions, got students to sign petitions so we had 11th and 12th grades, grade students involved in this. Most of my friends at Austin High were people kind of on the edge like me. They could be Quakers. They could be Unitarians. Jewish, whoever was sort of on the edge of West Austin society as such.

I'm talking about Austin High being a place that was so great that the Governor's children went to Austin High. The legislator's children went to Austin High. The rich folks in West Austin, Tarrytown, you name it, went to Austin High. Very few kids went to private school.

We decided to go to the City Council. I remembered going there without my parents' permission and I think I lied to them that I was at some kind of afterschool activity. We were saying they should open up Barton Springs. Open up Zilker Park. I think we were thinking not only for our picnic but also just open it up. Now, that could raise a lot of blood pressures in the white community of that day.

I kind of slightly remember maybe we were allowed to go to the Park, but never to get into the water. We were not to get into that water and, you know, there's all sorts of ignorance, you know, about getting in too close or in an intimate environment with Black people on the part of whites.

So what we did (after this) was we swam-in. A swim-in is you just jump in and then they come and pull you out. You go around the building. You go back in and you just do this all day. There was no fence around Barton Springs at that time. So I really believe that once we started the swim-in, we got in touch with a couple of university students and before we knew it, University of Texas, Huston-Tillotson, St. Ed's, all kinds of young people joined in this protest.

So that summer, we failed, so this just continued to be swim-in, swim-in, swim-ins. Then the next summer more swim-ins and eventually Beverly Sheffield (Austin Parks and

Recreation Director) must've been part of that decision to go ahead to open both Barton Springs and the Park to anybody.

And as far as I know—and this is, I'm not trying to take credit for anything—but as far as I know, this began the activist stage of civil rights in Austin. Before it was, you know, test cases. But opening Barton Springs and Zilker Park, I believe, really started a lot of other things in other areas of the city.”

Today, Barton Springs Pool is the soul of Austin. The crown jewel of our city. It is the gathering place for people from all over Austin and around the world. A true oasis of history, nature, and recreation located in the very heart of Austin. When people think of Austin, they think of Barton Springs. When people visit Barton Springs, they walk through the gates and you can hear them exhale sighs of wonder, “it’s so beautiful”. They are not just talking about the natural beauty of the pool, they see it is a wonderful gathering place that welcomes everyone from all walks of life. It is where we as a community come together to enjoy life with our families, friends and loved ones.

Joan Means Khabele’s vision, leadership skills and courage to make her vision a reality made Barton Springs Pool what it is today. We owe it to her memory, and to everyone who enters the bathhouse, to recognize her significant contributions to the City of Austin. I imagine a photo or work of art of Joan near the entrance of the bathhouse and can see people nodding in silent tribute, throwing her a kiss or waving thank you as they enter the gates and touch the soul of Austin.

I look forward to seeing parents bend down to answer their children’s questions while they wait in line, “Who is that, mom?”

Joan's story embodies what Martin Luther King, Jr., reminded us about when he said “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” Gracing the bathhouse with Joan’s name will create moments of reflection that echo the past while propelling us into the future. A young girl once barred from entering the bathhouse due to segregation has now evolved into an enduring symbol of courage, activism, and transformation. Renaming the bathhouse in her honor isn't just a tribute; it's a powerful recognition of the strides we've taken and the path forward we will still tread.

Her actions, like pebbles cast into a pond, have sent ripples that traverse time, touching hearts through the decades and stretching into the uncharted future. When Joan's name graces the bathhouse, a place she was once denied entrance, those ripples of change will reverberate into a resounding legacy. With every footstep through its entrance, visitors will feel the resonance of Joan's stand against segregation—a stand that continues to inspire hearts across generations.

This tribute isn't confined to the past; it's an investment in the future. By honoring Joan in this way, we're making a commitment to a future that mirrors her ideals of equality and inclusivity. Just as her bravery ignited a movement that opened Barton Springs Pool for everyone, this act to rename the bathhouse becomes a constant reminder that progress isn't static—it evolves, adapts,

and thrives. Every child walking through doors to Barton Springs Pool, every family gathering by the poolside, will be touched by Joan's spirit, guiding us towards a brighter, more just future for Austin.

Joan Means Khabele's actions are the seeds that continue to germinate and shape Austin's future. Renaming the bathhouse after her isn't merely a celebration of her courage; it's a declaration of our collective dedication to a more inclusive, accessible tomorrow. Her story and the bathhouse's renaming intersect to craft a narrative that extends beyond history—a narrative of progress, inclusivity, and the transformative power of a young girl's actions to weave a new tapestry of community.

Through the doors of the bathhouse, a gateway of inclusivity stands open—a testament that accessibility is not just a concept; it's an embodiment of ideals. Where once the bathhouse symbolized exclusion, it now symbolizes accessibility, welcoming everyone irrespective of their background. Joan's legacy becomes intertwined with the essence of a place that beckons forth a new era, where the barriers of the past give way to the possibilities of the present and future.

As the doors swing open, they swing open to all—a space where equity and unity thrive. Joan's legacy extends beyond the present, casting its influence on tomorrows yet to unfold. Here, individuals from diverse walks of life will convene, connect, and shape a future rooted in access, acceptance, and shared humanity. Joan Means Khabele's story will continue to remind us that one person's unwavering courage and ability to harness the power of her community has the power to ignite change that reverberates through time, inspiring us to stand up for justice and forge a better world for all.

**Community Members Initiating Naming of Bathhouse for
Joan Means Khabele**

Inonge Khabele
A. A. Means
Rebecca Roddy
Scott Cobb
The Rev. Eileen O'Brien
Steven Brown
Teri Adams
Julia Hatch
Jonathan Selfridge
Robin Rather
Tanya Payne
Dana S. Hegar
Elleyna Thompson
Elliot Kralj
Andrew Chin
Jamie Bush
Gloria Rubac
Kayte VanScoy
Pauline Rubben
Avery Maness
Becca Golden
Pat Hartwell Harper
Miraba DiRaddo
Chris DiRaddo



Ceremonial Moment of Silence & Splash
HONORING
Joan Means Khabele

OCTOBER 22, 1942 - OCTOBER 11, 2021



SATURDAY
APRIL 9
10am-12pm



BARTON SPRINGS POOL
CEREMONY HONORING JOAN MEANS KHABELE

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2022, 10:00 A.M.
2201 WILLIAM BARTON DRIVE, AUSTIN, TX 78746

This is an outdoor park event, please dress comfortably.
Swimsuits encouraged for those wishing to "splash" into the pool after the ceremony and moment of silence.



The City of Austin is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Reasonable modifications and equal access to communications will be provided upon request. For assistance please contact (512) 974-3914 or Relay Texas 7-1-1.



James Means, Bertha Sadler Means and their daughter, Joan Means Khabele, pose for a family portrait during the 1940s



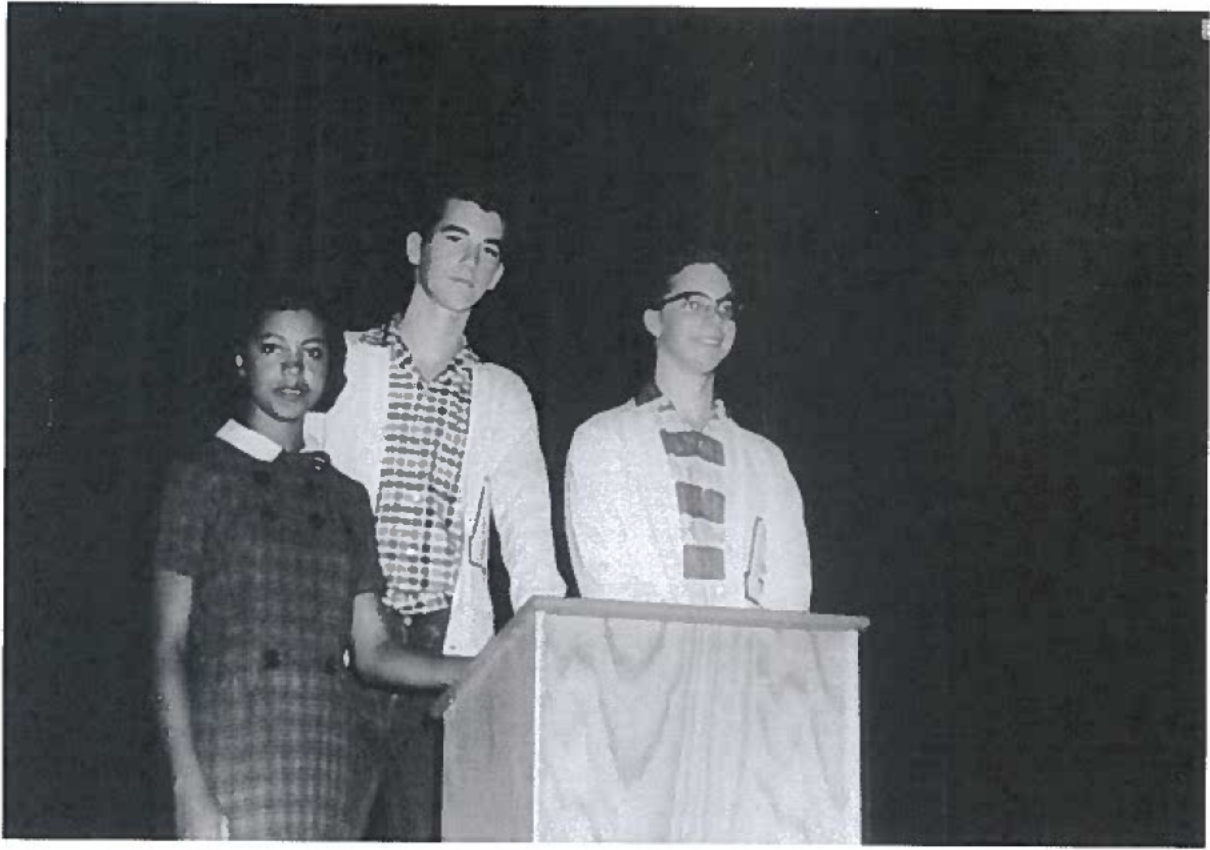


Joan Means Khabele (center) was in the third small group of students to integrate Austin High School in the 1950s. | Photo provided by Austin Parks and Recreation





Austin High Red Jackets 1959



Austin High Student Council 1959