

# **Application**

**For the square located at Abercorn Street and East Wayne Street.**

## **Submit**

**The name of Preacher George Liele**

## **Submitted by**

**Leroy Pace, Jr.**

## **Date**

**May 1, 2023**



May 12, 2023

Savannah's Black history in large part was centered around the church. Therefore, it is with great enthusiasm that I submit this application to rename Calhoun Square to Preacher/Rev. George Leile Square. George Leile in 1773 preached up and down the Savannah River, before constituting the First Colored Baptist Church in 1777. He was freed just before the start of the American Revolutionary War and would later make his way to Jamaica and become the first missionary of the United States of America.

First African Baptist Church is a successful tourist stop five days a week to tourists visiting Savannah. The Historic First African Baptist Church employs Docents that convey the influence he had as a contributor to the history of Savannah; each time a tour occurs. He was an important contributor to Savannah history; during his lifetime, he went from Slave to International Missionary.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Gillespie  
Office Manager, First African Baptist Church



May 12, 2023

To Whom it may concern,

As Executive Director of George Leile Visions Inc the nonprofit of First African Baptist Church, named after the first Pastor of the The First African Baptist Church. formerly known as the First Colored Baptist Church, started by George Leile in 1773 and constituted in 1777. Born a slave in Virginia sold to Henry Sharpe and being granted permission to preach up and down the banks of the Savannah River. These milestones would then lead to George Leile becoming the first missionary of the United States in 1789 and starting two more Baptist Churches in Kingston, Jamaica.

As we carry on the name and the legacy of George Leile, It is our goal and the reason that we were created to spread the vision and focus of George Leile, to help the least, the last, and the lost. It would be such an honor to have the square at Abercorn Street and East Wayne Street named after Rev. George Leile. A slave turned freeman, and missionary to the world. Having George Leile's name forever memorialized here in the city of Savannah, Georgia would grant the world an opportunity to know that anything is possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Derrek J. Curry", with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Derrek J. Curry



## Office of the Mayor Savannah, Georgia

**Van R. Johnson, II**  
Mayor

May 31, 2023

City Hall  
2 East Bay Street  
Savannah, Georgia 31402

**Re: Naming Request Endorsement for Consideration- 'George Leile Square'**

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Mayor Van Johnson, II, officially endorse the naming request for consideration to name the public square located on Abercorn and East Wayne Streets, to 'George Leile Square' in accordance with City Ordinance and the process outlined within 'Article E. Naming of Public Property, Facilities, and Streets'.

I look forward to this application advancing within the process as required by City Code.

Thank you,

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Van R. Johnson II", is written over the word "Sincerely".

Mayor Van Johnson



## CITY OF SAVANNAH—CITY COUNCIL

**Linda Wilder-Bryan**  
District 3

May 12, 2023

City Hall  
2 East Bay Street  
Savannah, Georgia 31402

**Re: Naming Request Endorsement for Consideration- 'George Liele Square'**

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Alderwoman Linda Wilder- Bryan, officially endorse the naming request for consideration to name the public square located on Abercorn and East Wayne Streets, to 'George Liele Square' in accordance with City Ordinance and the process outlined within 'Article E. Naming of Public Property, Facilities, and Streets'.

I look forward to this application advancing within the process as required by the City Code.

Thank you,



**Alderwoman Linda Wilder- Bryan**  
District 3  
Savannah City Council

**SENATOR DEREK MALLOW**  
District 2

304 Coverdell Legislative Office Building  
18 Capitol Sq. SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Phone: (404) 656-7586

E-mail: [Derek.Mallow@senate.ga.gov](mailto:Derek.Mallow@senate.ga.gov)



**COMMITTEES:**  
Children and Families  
Economic Development and Tourism  
Ethics  
State and Local Government Operations  
Transportation

**The State Senate**  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

May 9, 2023

To whom it may concern,

As the Senator of the second district, I would like to take this opportunity to lend my support for the application in renaming a square in the city of Savannah. This application seeks to rename the square at Abercorn Street and East Wayne Street. The name to be presented for consideration is Preacher George Liele who was the first black Baptist in Georgia played a vital role in establishing the first ever black Baptist church in the United States. While Preacher Liele was born in Virginia, he spent most of his life in the state of Georgia as a slave.

As a slave he was converted and baptized and went on to become a probationer in 1773 and for several years he went around preaching in slave quarters in Savannah and even preached to Silver Bluff, South Carolina. He was freed from slavery shortly before the revolutionary war and dedicated his freed life to serving others by founding the first black Baptist church which is home to one of the oldest African congregations in the country. As the application points out, he began his life as a slave, but he lived as a free man in Christ. His courage and strength is nothing short of a miracle and should be honored by the city of Savannah by naming this square after him.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Derek Mallow".

Derek Mallow, State Senator  
District- 2

**George Liele was the first black Baptist in Georgia and the first black Baptist church in America resulted from his Evangelism.**

**Liele was born in Virginia in 1750 but lived much of his life as a slave in Georgia. He was converted and baptized by Matthew Moore, and ordained Baptist minister. Liele was licensed as a probationer around 1773 and for two years, he preached in the Slave Quarters of plantations surrounding Savannah, including the congregation formed at Silver Bluff, South Carolina.**

**Sharp freed Liele sometime before the Revolutionary war began, after Sharp's death in battle in 1778. Liele made his way to British occupied Savannah, where Sharp's heirs would have re-enslaved him but for the intervention of a British officer. Over the next few years, he builds a congregation of black Baptists, slave and free, including the Silver Bluff Group led by David George.**

**First African Baptist Church was home to one of the oldest African congregations in America.**

**The congregation was founded by enslaved preacher, George Liele in 1773 after the congregation moved to the city in 1774. The church split in 1802 and again in 1832. From the second split, some members stayed at the church and others left to start the Second African Baptist church, which is located on Houston Street.**

**When the construction was completed in 1859, the building became the first brick building owned by African Americans in the State of Georgia.**

**Adoniram Judson is often cited as the first Baptist Missionary from the United States. But, in fact, this designation belongs to George Liele. His story is an important part of missionary history and is worthy of emulation.**

**One of his converts was Andrew Bryan, who continued his work in Savannah after Liele and his family sailed with the British to Jamaica in 1784.**

**Over the years, Liele kept in touch with Bryan, George and other Baptist pioneers that he had converted. George Liele died in 1828. He began life as a slave, but he lived as a free man in Christ. "Historical significance for the City of Savannah the State of Georgia and North America, a church still in existence today."**

**Related entries:**

**First African Baptist Church**

**Andrew Bryan**

**David George**

## **Applicant**

**Leroy Pace, Jr.  
1614 East Henry Street  
Savannah, Georgia 31404  
Home: (912) 234-4112  
Cell: (912) 596-7732**

## **Date**

**May 1, 2023**