

RESOLUTION NO. 2020
***RELATIVE TO ADOPTING HONORARY STREET NAMING AFTER
JOHN “SPIDER” MARTIN, JR.***

BY:

Council Chairman Christopher Voccio
Council Member John Spanbauer
Council Member Kenny Tompkins
Council Member Andrew Touma
Mayor Robert M. Restaino

WHEREAS, John “Spider” Martin, Jr. was born August 18, 1931 in Asheville, North Carolina, the son of John W. Martin, Sr. and Emogene McCorkle. His parents moved to Niagara Falls when John Jr. was a young boy to find employment; and

WHEREAS, John “Spider” Martin, Jr. grew up at 6A Center Court here in Niagara Falls, where he found his interest in music and began his preparatory music studies. He attended the Manhattan School of Music for a short time. Still a young man, he began traveling with Lionel Hampton’s big band, where he worked with top recording artists such as Aretha Franklin, Etta Jones, William Picket, “Philly” Joe Jones, Johnny “Hammond” Smith, Nat Adderly and many more; and

WHEREAS, in the mid to late seventies, John “Spider” Martin, Jr. led a quintet featuring a very young musician named Joe Locke. They toured the east coast and backed many jazz giants including Dizzy Gillespie, Count Basie, Ramsey Lewis, Pepper Adams, Jimmy McGriff, and Tony Bennett. “Spider”, as he was commonly known, cut many albums on Tony Bennett’s Indie Jazz label, Improv Records, including “*Absolutely*” with Joe Locke and “*Make Magnificent Music*” with Tony Bennett/The McPartlands & Friends at the Downtown Club in Buffalo New York; and

Kennedy _____ Spanbauer _____ Tompkins _____ Touma _____ Voccio _____

WHEREAS, John “Spider” Martin, Jr. traveled throughout the United States and overseas, and appeared at many Jazz Festivals. When he returned home, he brought many national artists to the Niagara Falls music scene, especially the Ontario House, where some performances included Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Mariano and Lee Konitz. After recording several albums on his own, his focus changed to mentoring and educating students. He was the co-founder of the Production Center for the Arts in Florida, was active in charity work and hosted several concert series, including the Marathon for Cerebral Palsy. During his later years while home in Niagara Falls, he composed, orchestrated and performed with the Rochester and Buffalo Philharmonic orchestras; and

WHEREAS, John “Spider” Martin, Jr. passed away April 21, 2000, but his creative genius and musical styles have never been forgotten in the local jazz community, as he was inducted into the Niagara Falls Music Hall of Fame in 2018, and

WHEREAS, the City of Niagara Falls does recognize that in John “Spider” Martin, Jr. we had an outstanding citizen and amazing musician who shared his talent in many ways. Whether it was educating students or entertaining on the big stage, he represented his hometown of Niagara Falls, New York well.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that both the City Council and Mayor Robert M. Restaino of the City of Niagara Falls City Council do hereby honor the legacy of John “Spider” Martin, Jr. by giving the intersection of Main Street and Ontario Avenue the honorary name, ‘John “Spider” Martin Way’, and be it further

RESOLVED, that a 12” x 18” aluminum pedestal with graphic panel be placed at or near said intersection, subject to all necessary government approvals, giving the history and background information on his international travel, his music, and his relationship with and the Ontario House and the City of Niagara Falls.