

MOTION

Bessie Bruington Burke was the first Black American teacher and principal hired by the Los Angeles public school systems. Born on March 19, 1891, Burke was raised in what is today the North Hollywood area where she attended Berendo Elementary School and Polytechnic High School. She attended Los Angeles State Normal School which would later grow into the University of California Los Angeles.

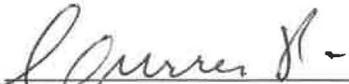
In 1911, Burke earned her teaching credential and began teaching at Holmes Avenue Elementary School in South Los Angeles as the first Black teacher in the Los Angeles public school systems. Seven years later, Burke was promoted and became the first Black principal in Los Angeles in 1918.

In 1938, after over having served over two decades as a trailblazing educator, Holmes became the principal of Nevin Avenue School, becoming the first Black principal of a racially integrated school.

In addition to her career in education, Burke was active in serving with the YWCA, NAACP, and Native California Club, working to advance the rights and representation of people of color and women.

Burke retired from the Los Angeles Board of Education in 1955 and passed away in 1968. In recognition of Burke’s historic role integrating Los Angeles’ schools and legacy as an educator, it is appropriate that the City name the intersection of 51st Street and Holmes Avenue as “Bessie Burke Square.”

I THEREFORE MOVE that the intersection at 51st Street and Holmes Avenue be named as “**Bessie Burke Square**” and that the Department of Transportation be directed to erect permanent ceremonial sign(s) to this effect at this location.

PRESENTED BY: 
CURREN D. PRICE, JR.
Councilmember, 9th District

SECONDED BY: 

ORIGINAL

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