



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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November 28, 2017

Hon. Terri Cude, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan
3 Washington Square Village, #1A
New York, NY 10012

Hon. Corey Johnson, City Councilmember
3rd District
224 West 30th Street, Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001

**Re: Honorary Street Renaming for MacDougal Street between Houston
and King Streets as “Lucy and Lenny Cecere Way”**

Dear Terri and Corey,

I write to propose consideration of an honorary secondary street renaming for MacDougal Street between Houston and King Streets, as “Lucy and Lenny Cecere Way.”

I know you are both familiar with Lenny and Lucy and their tremendously deep and broad set of contributions to their community. I also know that you know the incredibly high esteem in which they were both held by their neighbors and their community, and the deep affection which was felt for both of them.

Their role as community leaders and advocates, and local small businesspeople who were uniquely embedded into the life of the community in which they lived and served, make them ideal choices to be honored and remembered with a secondary street renaming on the block where they lived and owned a home since 1962.

I have reached out to their family and their former neighbors on MacDougal Street about this possibility. Lucy and Lenny’s daughter Francine has indicated that her family would be incredibly honored by such a gesture. And to a person, every neighbor on or near MacDougal Street to whom I have reached out has responded warmly and enthusiastically to the idea of permanently commemorating their presence with an honorary street renaming.

As you know, Lucy Cecere was born to Italian immigrant parents and raised in Greenwich Village, always living near the MacDougal Street home she shared with Lenny and their family for the last several decades of her life. She co-founded the Caring Community and helped save the Village Nursing Home from closure in 1975. She was also a founding member of GVSHP’s South Village Historic Preservation Advisory board, a lifelong parishioner at Our Lady of Pompeii Church, and an indefatigable advocate for her community.

Lenny Cecere was born in Brooklyn, also to Italian immigrant parents, but lived in the Village from 1949 on. Lenny was an army veteran involved with the allied recapture of France and the Battle of the Bulge. After marrying Lucy at Our Lady of Pompeii in 1949, they moved to nearby Sullivan Street. After they bought 51 MacDougal Street in 1962, Lenny eventually took over the retail space on the ground floor, turning it into a store called "Something Special," selling doughnuts, bagels, candy, greeting cards, and eventually renting mailboxes and copying keys. In this capacity Lenny became a beloved and widely-known fixture in the community, whom countless Villagers, famous and everyday, came to rely upon for essential services in their daily lives. Lenny was also an active member of the Father's Club at Our Lady of Pompeii School, and a member of the Knights of Columbus and American Legion posts in Greenwich Village.

Lenny and Lucy's story speaks to so much about what should be honored and remembered in our community. They were fixtures in the Village, which they loved, and gave so much to the lives of their neighbors, whether it was their warmth and humor, their tenacious advocacy, their service, or their friendship. They were the children of immigrants, they were activists, they were small business people, and most of all, they were inextricably interwoven and enormously engaged with the fabric of their neighborhood.

As you may also know, since their passing, 51 MacDougal Street, their former home and the home of their business, has been sold, and it is expected that new owners will make some substantial changes to the building to reflect the new occupancy. With this last physical connection to Lucy and Lenny's presence in the neighborhood changing, it seems like an appropriate time to look for a new and permanent way to honor and memorialize the Cecere's and their contributions.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: Francine O'Brien-Cecere