



## Shirley Merrick Way Dedication

### Description

Congratulations to the Shirley Merrick Family on the dedication of “Shirley Merrick Way” at the corner of Avondale Avenue and Reading Road where the health food store once stood.

On Friday, February 23, 2024, at 2:00 pm, Vice Mayor Kearney held the dedication of “Shirley Merrick Way” as a secondary honorary sign to the Avondale Avenue street sign. The Merrick Family has a long history in North Avondale and the establishment of the G & A Health Food store. The Vice Mayor noted that this was Black History Month and that G & Shirley was the first black-owned health food store in Cincinnati and the United States of America.

The weather was beautiful for the event, and in addition to Vice Mayor Kearney, other Cincinnati dignitaries spoke, including Dwight Twillery and Curtis Fuller. The Merrick Family was well represented and included stories by her children and a poem written by her surviving husband.

Here’s the program from the dedication:

Opening Prayer & Scripture, Proverbs 31  
Former Councilman Paul M. Booth

Shirley A. Merrick – “Her Story”  
Minister Vuncia V. Council (daughter),  
Co-founder, SOS Ministries

#### Tributes and Testimonials

Kent Robinson, M.D. and Dr. Denise Davis, M.D. in absentia  
Valynda A. Mitchell (daughter), Owner & Manager, G & Shirley’s Health Food Store  
Ron Buchanon, Fellow Zion Baptist Church Member, Former Bodybuilder, Customer  
Former Mayor Dwight Tillery, Founder of Closing the Health Gap, Customer  
Courtis Fuller, News Broadcaster WLWT-TV, Public Servant

“Ode to Shirley” poem written by Henry Putnam Merrick  
Deuteronomy 10:21

Unveiling of “Shirley A. Merrick Way,” Reading of the City Ordinance, and Presentations  
Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney

Music

Roberta Garrison Fischer (niece from New York, NY), Singer & Reverend Valdasia Merrick (daughter)

Remarks

Deacon Emeritus Henry Putnam Merrick, Retired Deputy Chief of Greater Cincinnati Air Traffic Control  
Reverend Valdasia Shirley Merrick

Benediction

Reverend Valdasia Shirley Merrick (daughter), Founder/Director of Joseph Dream International Ministries



*Photos by J. Miles Wolf and Maura Wolf*

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Watch “Honorary street naming held in Avondale for beloved Shirley Merrick” on YouTube

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