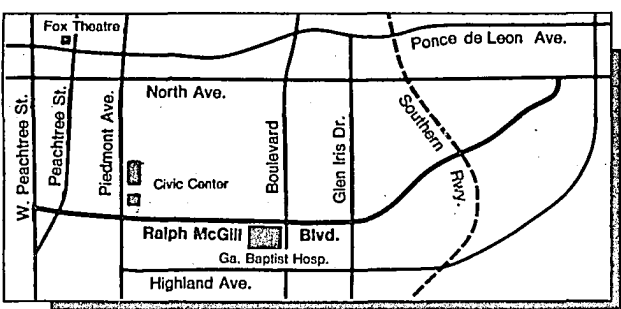


Staff Photos—Jerome McClendon

Ralph McGill's Widow, Mrs. Mary Lynn McGill Smith, Grandchildren Listen As Jackson Dedicates Boulevard

# City Street Renamed McGill Boulevard



Staff Map—Vernon Carne

By David Morrison  
 Constitution Staff Writer

A street originally named after one of the founders of the Ku Klux Klan was officially redesignated Ralph McGill Boulevard Tuesday, honoring the late editor and publisher of *The Atlanta Constitution*, who was one of the South's foremost champions of civil rights causes during the 1950s and 1960s.

Citing McGill for "an unusual brand of courage" and "a powerful and courageous pen," Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson dedicated the new McGill Boulevard, formerly named Forrest Avenue in honor of Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest.

With Jackson at the dedication ceremonies were McGill's widow, Dr. Mary Lynn McGill Smith; his two grandchildren, 12-year-old Ralph McGill III and 9-year-old Megan McGill; and Grace Lundy, McGill's long-time secretary at *The Constitution*.

Also present were Tom Wood, president of *Atlanta Newspapers*, and Hal Gulliver, editor of *The Constitution*.

During his career, Ralph Emerson McGill was cited for his work as the crusading editor of "The South's Standard Newspaper" many times. He held honorary degrees from Harvard, Brown, Columbia and Notre Dame universities, among others, and won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing in 1959.

McGill loved the South, Gulliver said during the brief midafternoon ceremony in tiny Mayor's Park at the intersection of Courtland Street and McGill Boulevard, and he wrote about it "warts and all."

Gulliver said McGill "spoke out again and again" not only against racism and injustice in the South, but in support of a region that "economically had been punished" by the rest of the nation.

"Those of us at the newspaper have been impressed by that tradition and by that history of McGill showing us what a great newspaper can do at a time when it is against the tides and against traditions," Gulliver said.

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# McGill

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The dedication ceremony ended a nine-year controversy that began when a Quaker organization sought unsuccessfully to have Atlanta's Board of Aldermen get rid of the name Forrest Avenue.

The name change resulted directly from an ordinance authored last year by City Councilman Morris Finley as part of a plan to rename streets in the Bedford-Pine area of the city "after people who have helped black people."

Mayor Jackson used the occasion Tuesday to announce that the Atlanta Civic Center — the cornerstone of the Bedford-Pine revitalization program, a heretofore government-subsidized operation — is for the first time this year operating profitably.

He said it is fitting to change Forrest Avenue to McGill Boulevard because the thoroughfare traverses the booming Bedford-Pine district, "the kind of revitalization, the kind of 'New South,' for which Mister McGill fought.

"Ralph McGill believed in and fought for a more just, a more humane society," Jackson continued. "A man with a powerful and courageous pen, he spoke for freedom, he spoke for justice, he spoke for equality in a South that not always welcomed his message."