

MOTION

Edmund Lincoln Anderson was an American comedian and actor born in Oakland, California, on September 18, 1905. Mr. Anderson enjoyed a decade's long career in the entertainment industry. His success was due, in part, to his uniquely recognizable voice. His piercing gravel voice was a famous trademark to both radio listeners and television viewers.

At 14, he began performing in vaudeville theaters throughout San Francisco. Mr. Anderson settled in Los Angeles in the late 1930s. In 1937, he landed his first role, appearing on the Jack Benny Radio Program in 1937 as "Rochester," a train porter. Initially written as a one-time character, the "Rochester" character was immensely popular. Mr. Anderson was made a regular member of the program, becoming the first African American to have a regular role on a nationwide radio program. He was also one of the first African Americans to have a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 2001.

Despite the racial inequalities prevalent throughout his career, Mr. Anderson enjoyed success in a number of pursuits. In 1940, he was designated the "Mayor of Central Avenue" in Los Angeles, giving him a platform to speak out on issues impacting the local African American community. Mr. Anderson actively campaigned for African Americans to serve as aviators. He also engaged in an array of business pursuits during his life. During World War II, Mr. Anderson owned and operated the "Pacific Parachute Company" which produced parachutes for the Army and Navy. During this time, he was also seriously invested in professional boxing, managing Billy Metcalfe.

By the 1930s, Mr. Anderson had become one of the best paid African American actors in the United States. Unfortunately, his race limited the neighborhoods in which he could live. Mr. Anderson purchased several lots in the West Adams district for the construction of his dream home. In 1942, construction was completed on his dream home, "The Rochester Mansion." The home was designed and built by the famous African American architect Paul Williams. The home is located on Rochester Circle which was renamed in Mr. Anderson's honor in the 1980s.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the intersection at Rochester Circle and Cimarron Street be named as "Rochester Square" and that the Department of Transportation be directed to erect permanent ceremonial sign(s) to this effect at this location.

PRESENTED BY: MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON
Councilmember, 8th DistrictSECONDED BY: 

ORIGINAL

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