

September 15, 2008

The Honorable, the Cambridge City Council  
Cambridge City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Members of the City Council:

We would like to thank the City Council for its willingness to consider the resolution requesting that the Council rename Plympton Street as Halberstam Street. We understand that this is a consequential act that requires both thoughtful consideration by the Council itself as well as careful consultation with Plympton Street residents and the larger Cambridge community. Therefore we are grateful that you have referred this resolution to committee.

Our object in this letter to the City Council is simply to state briefly the case for renaming the street. Basically, of course, our goal is to honor the memory of David L. Halberstam (Harvard class of 1955), who was killed in a car crash in California on 23 April 2007. David was, quite simply, one of the most important journalists of his generation, and of course he was one of the most distinguished journalistic alumni of Harvard University, and of the *Harvard Crimson*.

David was a writer for the *Crimson* throughout his undergraduate years (1951-55), during which he rose to positions of journalistic leadership, first as Sports Editor and ultimately as Managing Editor. He developed during those years the dogged determination to get to the bottom of a story that characterized him as a journalist even long after he was dependent upon daily journalism to earn a living. He represented a sort of traditional approach to reporting, consuming shoe leather and notebooks at a great rate. He learned his trade well at the *Crimson*.

Typically, David turned down the opportunity to work for a metropolitan daily after earning his college degree. Instead, he took a job at the West Point, Mississippi newspaper, where he was virtually a one man staff – reporting, taking photographs, selling advertising, and more. As would happen several times during his career, he was in the right place at the right time, since he was probably the reporter closest to the site of the Emmet Till murder in August, 1955, and he did much of the national reporting on that story, though it was only a couple of months after his graduation from Harvard.

Then David moved to a great regional paper, the Nashville *Tennessean*, where he was available to cover the local sit-ins as the Civil Rights movement was launched. From there he was hired by the New York *Times*, which soon sent him to Africa to cover the emerging revolution in the Congo. And from there the *Times* transferred him to Viet Nam, where he became one of the small group of brilliant journalists covering a tragic war – and won a Pulitzer Prize for reporting for his ability to cut through the fog of official disinformation regarding that war. He later represented the *Times* in Warsaw, but soon abandoned daily journalism for a career in free-lance writing, part journalism and part history, that brought him even bigger audiences and greater fame.

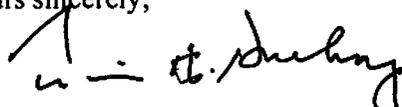
David wrote twenty books in a dazzlingly productive career. Although he tried his hand at fiction (he wrote two novels), his genius was for in-depth coverage of public affairs. His best-selling and no

doubt most famous book was *The Best and The Brightest* (1972), still one of the most powerful books written on the Viet Nam war. He continued his fascination with the relation of democracy to war in two subsequent books, which together with *The Best and the Brightest* constitute what he considered a trilogy on the United States at war: *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton and the Generals* (2001) and his final, posthumously published, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (2007). Along the way he wrote brilliantly on professional football, basketball and baseball (the sports editor in him refused to die), the newspaper and automobile industries, and much more. Each of these was a reporter's book, based on hundreds of personal interviews which David stitched together with a mastery that increased book by book, year by year.

David was also a magnificent public presence. He appeared weekly on public, cable and network television, since he was one of the most esteemed commentators on public events in this country. He also lectured frequently and widely, especially to college audiences. His sober opinions and resonant speech tones were well known to and admired by millions of Americans, so that his voice was one that counted far beyond the readers of his books.

David Halberstam's career thus exemplified much that is best (and a lot that has been lost) in American journalism. But perhaps the value that best characterizes his accomplishment is the commitment to painstaking investigative journalism that he learned at the *Crimson* and on Plympton Street. Changing the street name to Halberstam would go a long way toward commemorating the high standards of journalism that David stood for.

Yours sincerely,



Francis H. Duehay. Cambridge, Massachusetts. Former City Councillor and Mayor, Cambridge; former Administrator and Teacher, Harvard and Tufts Universities.

Peter G. Palches. Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. Former Superintendent of Schools, Martha's Vineyard.

Stanley N. Katz. Princeton, New Jersey. Professor of Public and International Affairs, *Emeritus*, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University; President, *Emeritus*, American Council of Learned Societies.

John Langguth. Los Angeles, California. Former correspondent, New York Times; former Dean, USC School of Journalism.

Warren M. Little. Cambridge, Massachusetts. Executive Director, Cambridge Historical Society (ret.).

Richard H. Ullman. Princeton, New Jersey. Professor of Public and International Affairs, *Emeritus*, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University; former member, Editorial Board, New York Times.

Benjamin Heineman, Jr. Cambridge, Massachusetts. Senior Fellow, Harvard Law School and Harvard Kennedy School; former Vice President and General Counsel, General Electric Corporation.

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Charles J. Epstein, M.D. San Francisco, California. Professor of Pediatrics, *Emeritus*, University of California, San Francisco.

Gordon Graham. County Down, Northern Ireland. Priest-in-charge, St. Paul's Parish Church, Castlewellen (ret.).

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Susanna Ulfelder. Cambridge, Massachusetts. Artist.

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12/30/07

B

DAVID HALBERSTAM

b. 1935

## The Combatant

An uncompromising approach, and not just to reporting in Vietnam.

By Neil Sheehan

THE DAY IN EARLY JANUARY 1963, David Halberstam, portable typewriter in hand, appeared at the ground-floor apartment I was renting on a side street in Saigon. The front room served as an office. I slept in the second room at the back. I was the correspondent for United Press International, and David was in Vietnam for The New York Times. It was typical of the man that he did not ask, "May I join you?" Although wire-service reporters and daily-newspaper journalists often teamed up overseas, he simply assumed he would be welcome and set his typewriter down on the other side of the table used as a desk. That day was the beginning of a partnership and, in ten years after our assignments in Vietnam were over, a friendship that was to endure until he was killed in a car crash in California last April. There were no secrets between us. On days when we were both in Saigon, rather than out in the countryside reporting on the fighting, we would fix on a story we sensed was ready to be told, set off separately to see our sources in order to limit their exposure and then share everything we gleaned.

Vietnam in 1963 was something unimaginable to most Americans, still basking in the triumphant glow of the Second World War. The conflict was being lost, but the commanding general, Paul Harkins, and the ambassador in Saigon, Frederick Nolting, insisted that victory was around the corner. Harkins and Nolting cursed us and the other American reporters of spreading falsehoods. We were politically suspect. We ought to be fired. Many of our editors doubted us. David was just 28 when we teamed up, and I was 26. How could these kids be right when a four-star general and a senior diplomat said they were absolutely wrong?

David thrived on the conflict. He was a proud man who did not take slights easily. In 1963, it still rankled him that as a scholarship student at Harvard in the class of 1955, he was required to clean the rooms of rich preppies. The confrontation with Harkins and Nolting ought to have brought out the combativeness in him. To David, they were not just fools and liars. They were criminal fools and liars. They were bringing defeat on the nation, throwing away the lives of American and Vietnamese soldiers and slaughtering old men, women and children with mortar and artillery bombardments, all for nothing. At the annual Fourth of July celebration at the ambassador's residence that year, Harkins

was stunned when David, scorning the hypocritical civility most of us were still willing to indulge in, refused to shake the general's hand.

In contrast to the attitude at the Saigon headquarters, the military advisers in the field took a particular liking to David. His physical courage in action matched his moral courage, and professional soldiers respect that. The advisers in the southern Mekong Delta initiated him into the exclusive "Blackfoot Club." Membership was confined to those who spent enough time in the rice paddies so that the mud soaked through their boots and turned their feet black. The officers in the field in Vietnam, unlike some who were to command in Iraq, were a generation of military men who did not believe in waiting

until they retired to tell us what was wrong. David was a good student. His dispatches on the fighting in the Mekong Delta, then the cockpit of the war, grew remarkably sophisticated. Had President Kennedy relied on David's reports, and not on those he was receiving from the Pentagon and the C.I.A., he would have been a well-informed man.

Yes, David had an ego, quite a large one, and some were irritated by it, particularly in later years as his fame as a journalist and author grew. It never bothered me, because I accepted it as natural to the man, as the catalyst of his creativity. David's ego was like the afterburner on the engine of a jet

fighter. When it kicked in, it lofted him to new heights of productivity. His energy was infectious, and he kept it well stoked. I would eat one steak for lunch at a Saigon bistro. David ate two.

Some months into our partnership, after the Diem regime provoked the Buddhist monks into rebellion, the government began to censor so aggressively that nothing meaningful could get through the cable office. We resorted to sending our dispatches out with sympathetic pilots and flight attendants on planes passing through Saigon's airport, with instructions to telephone the U.P.I. office at their next destination for a pickup. One night we were so wrung out from days of covering demonstrations, dodging police batons and choking on tear gas that we kept dozing over our typewriters. We considered giving in to our exhaustion for a few hours of sleep, but if we did we might not finish our reports in time for the first plane in the morning. "A reporter doesn't have a right to be tired," David finally said, ending the discussion. Our dispatches went out on the morning flight. ■



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## And Another Thing...

Opinions, observations, and anecdotes

From Boston Globe columnist Bob Ryan

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### Honoring Halberstam

Posted by Bob Ryan, Globe Staff June 13, 2007 04:27 PM

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So how does a truly great man get sent off by the city he loved?

If you're David Halberstam, you get famed Jazz pianist Billy Taylor playing an uninterrupted half hour of "Selections" as the guests take their seats at the mammoth Riverside Episcopal Church on the far Upper West Side of Manhattan.

You get Paul Simon singing "Mrs. Robinson," while apologizing because he didn't have any Ted Williams songs (Dave McKenna, the great jazz pianist and fanatical Red Sox fan, did give us a song entitled "Splendid Splinter," but, alas, there are no lyrics).

You get Lucy Chapin with "Wildflowers." You get Peter Yarrow, of "Peter, Paul and Mary" fame, with "Sweet Survivors."

You get Robert Johanson with an a capella rendering of the 23d Psalm.

You get the Columbus Memorial Pipe Band playing the march "American Spirit."

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Bob is an award-winning columnist for the Globe and the host of the new NESN show "The Globe 10.0"

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#### BOB'S LATEST COLUMNS

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You get the 10-member Metropolitan Baptist Choir with a powerhouse American line "Beautiful" like you ain't never heard before. You get the likes of Ben Bradlee, David Remnick, Bill Kovach, Graydon Carter, Les Gelb, and Calvin Trillin among the honorary pallbearers.

You get 10 speakers, some of whom the public knows (Anna Quindlen, Neil Sheehan, Congressman John Lewis, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Gay Talese, etc.), and some of whom they don't know, but all chosen because of specific connection to a man whose tentacles were endless.

You get nearly two hours, and when it's done the overall effect on those in attendance is to reinforce the idea that David Halberstam, who died at age 73 in an automobile accident on April 23, was perhaps even more of an amazing man than most of us had realized.

You can't even say he led a dual life. He led a phenomenally multi-layered life. For among the speakers were old journalistic friends such as Sheehan, whom he had met 44 years ago in Saigon when both were covering the Vietnam War, as well as Sean Newman, a fireman whose home station had been immortalized by Halberstam in his vital book "Firehouse," a story of the men who lost 12 comrades on 9/11, and which is located in Halberstam's midtown neighborhood; and Ralph Hockley, a Korean War veteran befriended by Halberstam beginning in 2002, when Halberstam began work on what would turn out to be his final epic journalistic effort, a book entitled "The Coldest Winter," a tome on the whys and wherefores of the Korean War that will hit the bookstores in September. Hockley said that Halberstam had told him he was enormously proud of this book, that it was, in his judgment, his "best" book ever.

Another speaker was Dexter Filkins, a New York Times reporter who has spent the last four years in Iraq. He said he felt a bit funny to be up there because he really didn't know David Halberstam very well.

What he did know was that David Halberstam was universally regarded as the patron saint of all Iraq War correspondents, all of whom had read "The Best And the Brightest," Halberstam's legendary tale of the massive screw-up that was the Vietnam War. Using a sports metaphor he said he was certain Halberstam would have loved, Filkins said that Halberstam had served as the "pulling guard" for all subsequent war correspondents. "He cleared the way for us all," Filkins said.

The speakers all had something to offer, but I was most moved by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Quoting someone (regrettably, I forget whom), she said that Halberstam ideally fulfilled the idea set forth to balance properly work, play, and love. The work part was self-evident. The play was two-fold.

First, there were his sports books, which were truly his recreation.

Secondly, there was his deep love of fishing, both fresh and salt water. There is a new, thick compendium of fishing stories on the market (Don't know the title, but I happened to see it in Barnes & Noble last week), for which he had written the foreword. One of the speakers said that when he was asked to do the foreword, he acted hurt that he had not actually been included as an author. He was just kidding, of course -- or was he? But he graciously wrote the foreword and it is of some considerable length.

His immediate family consisted of his wife, Jean, and his daughter, Julia, who read "if there are any heavens," a poem by e.e. cummings.

I make no claim to being a Halberstam intimate. But we were friends by any measure, and I will always cherish treasure the memory of the many phone calls we shared over the years. He invariably ended with, "Be well, my friend," and with his voice that sounded like an order. We first met in 1980 when he joined the Celtics on a West Coast trip. He was researching his first sports book, "The Breaks of the Game," and he was also working

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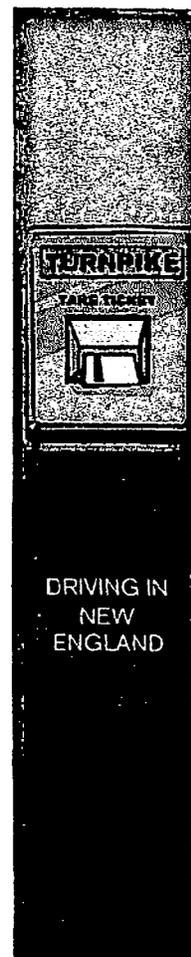
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simultaneously on a magazine piece about Pistol Pete Maravich. It was the beginning of a 27-year relationship that would culminate in our exchanges over his book on Bill Belichick, "The Education of a Coach." Coach Bill was present at Riverside Church on Tuesday, as were Scott Pioli and Belichick's personal assistant Berj Najarian.

Halberstam was a serious man, but he was also a total sports junkie. As a result of his forays into sport, he came away with friendships with the likes of Bill Walton, Dr. Jack Ramsay, Bob Knight, Belichick (a fellow Nantucket guy) and, of course, the venerable Red Sox trio of Johnny Pesky, Bobby Doerr, and Dom DiMaggio, immortalized in "The Teammates." And no one ever did more to explain the lonely sport of crew than he did in his exquisite book, "The Amateurs." He was killed, as many of you know, en route to an interview for his next sports venture, a book on the celebrated the 1958 Giants-Colts NFL Championship Game and the men who played in it.

To sit and listen to the remembrances of Pulitzer Prize winners, firemen, authors, soldiers and family friends such as author John Burnham Schwartz, who recounted just how much Halberstam loved to tell stories, was to be overwhelmed. How, you ask yourself, could one man touch so many disparate lives?

I am grateful to have been a peripheral satellite orbiting around the sun that was David Halberstam.

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 To: fduehay@aol.com  
 Subject: david's crimson obit  
 Date: Sun, 9 Mar 2008 9:18 am



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**Veteran Reporter Dies in Crash**

Halberstam, former Crimson managing editor, was 'just raw energy'

Published On Tuesday, April 24, 2007 5:06 AM

By **JAMISON A HILL**

Crimson Staff Writer

From the very beginning, David L. Halberstam '55 seemed destined for a career in journalism. Elected a news editor for The Crimson his freshman year, Halberstam rose through the ranks to garner the position of managing editor his junior year. It was his tireless devotion to the paper—sometimes even at the expense of his grades—and his endless enthusiasm that set him apart to those who knew him.

"He was just raw energy, you just saw the man in constant motion. I picture him at one or two in the morning looking over the last proofs of the paper before they went to print," said Arthur J. Langguth, Jr. '55, who was president of The Crimson when Halberstam was managing editor. "He was such a newsman that if it came to a choice between giving the paper all he had and keeping up with his work in his classes, his coursework would suffer."

And through his long and distinguished career as a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of over twenty books on subjects that varied from baseball to war, Halberstam never lost that passion and drive for journalism—a passion for which he will be revered.

Halberstam was killed in a car crash south of San Francisco yesterday while riding in the passenger seat to conduct an interview for his new book. He was pronounced dead at the scene, according to San Mateo County Coroner Robert J. Foucault. He was 73.

"It's obvious that he was probably the greatest journalist of his generation. He had a core integrity that gave him credibility and power, whether he was writing about basketball or Vietnam it carried an enormous amount of weight," said Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist J. Anthony Lewis '48, a former Crimson managing editor. "He was a sweet man—loyal, kind, thoughtful. I just didn't know anybody who is a better representation of journalism."

Born April 10, 1934 in the Bronx, N.Y., Halberstam followed his brother Michael to Harvard in 1951 and joined the paper that year, soon proving himself to be an intrepid and astute journalist.

"Every two weeks we would meet with the president of Harvard and it was always David who asked the penetrating questions. He wouldn't let the administration off the hook when there was some evidence

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Buy this photo  
 David L. Halberstam '55, former managing editor of The Crimson, died in a car crash Monday south of San Francisco.

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that things weren't going as they should," Langguth said.

And even as an undergraduate, Halberstam's interests could not be confined to any one subject. He wrote stories on a broad variety of topics from the Emmett Till case to Harvard football matches.

Described as "ferocious," Halberstam soon become "the spine of the newspaper" the year he was managing editor, according to Langguth. And even after his tenure came to an end, "he was one of those people who couldn't stay away," said former New York Times reporter Adam Clymer '58.

Upon graduation, Halberstam accepted a low-paying job as a staff writer for the Daily Times Leader in Mississippi and left Harvard to journey to the South to cover race relations.

"For our class, going into journalism was a little unusual but it didn't surprise us that David did," Phillip M. Cronin '53, a former president of The Crimson, said.

Halberstam's time with the Times Leader ended abruptly when he was fired for his coverage of the Civil Rights movement after only one year, according to his wife, Jean Halberstam. He went on to work at the Nashville Tennessean, a job which his wife said he loved.

Halberstam eventually left The Tennessean to take a job with The New York Times. After serving as a foreign correspondent in Africa, Halberstam was sent to Vietnam to cover the ongoing conflict, making him one of the first full-time Western newspaper journalists working in the country. His coverage of the war and the overthrow of the Diem government won him the 1964 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting. But this coverage also drew death threats from those opposed to his unflattering depictions of American involvement in Vietnam.

"He wrote very important news stories out of Vietnam showing some of the frustration and failures of military operations," said George S. Abrams '54, who served as managing editor of The Crimson the year before Halberstam.

"He angered President Kennedy, who asked the New York Times to change his assignment and move him out of Vietnam," Abrams said. "But The Times continued to let him cover Vietnam."

From his experiences during the war, Halberstam wrote what is considered one of his greatest works, "The Best and the Brightest." More than twenty books followed, with his most recent, "The Coldest Winter," a book about the Korean war, due out this upcoming fall. Halberstam had just finished the last proofs of this book before yesterday's car crash, according to his wife.

"He certainly was one of the greatest writers of 20th century," Cronin said, "and I can say that because I have read everything that he has ever written."

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Shary Page Berg, Chandra Harrington, *Alternates*

December 9, 2008

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager  
From: Charles Sullivan, Executive Director  
Cambridge Historical Commission  
Re: Plympton Street renaming

A petition has been filed to rename Plympton Street in Harvard Square as Halbertstam Street, after the journalist David Halbertstam. I suggest instead that the block of Plympton Street between Massachusetts Avenue and Bow Street be given a commemorative designation, and that the present name remain unchanged.

### History

Plympton Street carries the name of the Plympton family of Cambridge. Dr. Sylvanus Plympton (c. 1800-1865) was a member of the Harvard class of 1818 who graduated from the Medical School in 1822; he served as a selectman and state representative in 1842-43. His son, Dr. Henry Sylvanus Plympton (1838-1863), attended Columbia University and graduated from the Harvard Medical School in 1860. The younger Dr. Plympton was an Assistant Surgeon in the U.S. Navy when he died in 1863; his name is listed on the Civil War monument on Cambridge Common. Chestnut Street was renamed in 1873 after the Plympton family.

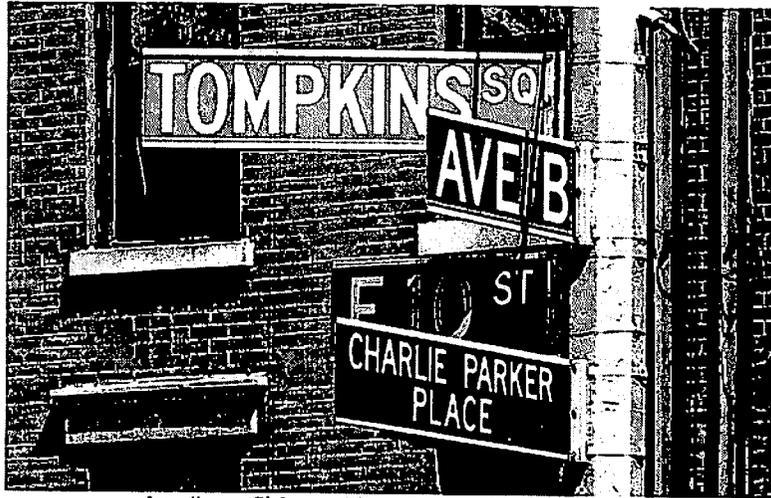
Plympton Street and Linden Street are associated with the Apthorp house, a Tory mansion once called 'the Bishop's Palace' and occupied today as the Master's Residence of Harvard's Adams House. The house was built in 1759 for Rev. East Apthorp, the rector of Christ Church, on a tract that stretched from Massachusetts Avenue to the Charles River. A speculator laid out streets on either side of the mansion about 1801 as part of an unsuccessful development scheme. The lots did not sell, but the streets – originally named Chestnut and Linden streets – were eventually accepted by the town as public ways.

Thomas Warland, a merchant tailor in Harvard Square, acquired the former Apthorp property in 1802, and on his death divided it between his daughters Elizabeth and Mary, who shared the house for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mary Warland married Dr. Sylvanus Plympton in 1823. Their son, Dr. Henry Plympton, died in 1863, and Dr. Plympton Sr. died in 1865. When the City Council renamed Chestnut Street in 1873 their action probably commemorated the Plymptons' loss of their son in the Civil war as well as their long residence on the street.

### Alternative to Renaming

I recommend that the Council leave the present name in place and adopt an honorific designation for the first block from Massachusetts Avenue to Bow Street, where Halberstam was associated with the

Harvard Crimson. This is practice widely used in New York and other cities. In most places, the designation is accomplished with an extra blade sign, with a different color and typeface, below the regular sign. An illustration of a typical New York City installation is attached.



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/professorbop/716432500/>

Recommendation

The present name of Plympton Street is significant for its associations with the history of Harvard Square and the sacrifice of the Plympton family during the Civil War. Leaving the present name in place will respect tradition and avoid confusion among the public. Adding the honorific blade sign will commemorate the contributions of Mr. Halbertstam in a dignified and appropriate manner.

List of Attached Letters

Sender

Date of Letter

Trustees of the Harvard Crimson Trust  
Edward L. Ballantyne  
Michael Halberstam  
Cambridge African American Heritage Alliance  
John G. Wofford

April 18, 2008  
May 4, 2008  
May 23, 2008  
September 9, 2008  
February 18, 2009

2008 MAY -1 A 11: 53

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02142

The Harvard Crimson Trust II  
14 Plympton Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

April 18, 2008

Cambridge City Council  
Cambridge City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council:

We are the Trustees of The Harvard Crimson Trust II and own the land and building at 14 Plympton Street.

We are advised that on April 7, 2008, the Council received a petition to change the name of Plympton Street to Halberstam Street and referred it to the Government Operations and Rules Committee.

We are opposed to renaming Plympton Street for the following reasons:

1.) The name of Plympton Street has always been used to identify our building. Most refer to the building as "Fourteen Plympton" rather than by any other name.

2.) Other than the change of the name of Boylston Street to John F. Kennedy Street, we are not aware of any changes of street names in the Harvard Square area in the last seventy years. This has provided continuity and stability.

3.) Renaming Plympton Street would single for recognition one individual. There are numerous persons associated with The Harvard Crimson who equally deserve such an honor.

Two former Presidents of the United States -- Franklin Delano Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy -- were Crimson editors. A Harvard President -- James Bryant Conant -- was an editor. A number

of Crimson editors who made a career in journalism won Pulitzer Prizes. These include, among others, Dana Reed, William Fairfield, Blair Clark, Anthony Lewis, J. Anthony Lukas, Nicholas D. Kristof, Susan C. Faludi, Linda J. Greenhouse, Will Englund. Crimson editors gave their lives for the country in the armed services. Crimson editors who did not enter journalism in many cases excelled as authors, playwrights, movie producers, artists, in the law and medicine, as judges and business people.

4.) David did not have any relationship to the Cambridge community. He lived in Harvard housing for his four undergraduate years. This is in contrast to his classmate and fellow Crimson editor, J. Anthony Lukas, who became a Cambridge resident. Tony received the Pulitzer Prize, the George Polk Memorial Award and the Mike Berger Award. He wrote, among other books, *Common Ground*, a profound and insightful study of social justice and race, describing three real families – Irish, Yankee and Black – in Charlestown, the South End and South Boston during the turmoil of school busing. Tony would probably still live in Cambridge were it not for his tragic death. J. Anthony Lewis, another Pulitzer Prize winner and former Crimson editor, is a long-time Cambridge resident.

5.) David L. Halberstam's brother, Michael B. Halberstam, was also a Crimson editor. He was a prominent physician in Washington, D.C. He was brutally gunned down by street thugs. David would want his brother honored first.

6.) If David were alive today, we can say with reasonable certainty that he would never consent to renaming the street. In death, he should not be dishonored by an action, however well-intentioned, that he would not want.

7.) We have honored David in far more substantive ways. We have established in his name a scholarship for students who otherwise could not afford to work at the Crimson. We have in his name awarded prizes for excellence in writing.

8.) The Crimson was founded in 1873, just two years before the naming of Plympton Street. The Crimson moved to its present building in 1915. Our building has always been called and will ever be known as "Fourteen Plympton."

Very truly yours,

The Harvard Crimson Trust II  
By its Trustees  
Philip M. Cronin  
3 Lincoln Lane  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
617-951-2100

George S. Abrams  
Winer & Abrams  
60 State Street  
Boston, MA 02109  
617-526-6539

Michael B. Moskow  
2 Park Square  
Boston, MA 02116  
617-426-5454

0219

60 Spook Rock Road  
Suffern, N.Y. 10901  
May 4, 2008

2008 MAY -7 A 10: 20

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

To the Cambridge City Council Government Committee:

I am writing as a classmate of David Halberstam (Harvard 1955) in support of the effort to change the name of Plympton Street, which runs past the Harvard Crimson building, to Halberstam Street. David began his illustrious newspaper, magazine and bookwriting career at The Crimson. and it would be a fitting tribute to him, I think, to rename the street in his honor. Thank you for your consideration at the committee hearing.

Yours truly,  
*Edward L. Ballantyne*  
Edward L. Ballantyne





INTERVIEWING SERVICE of AMERICA INC 7 A 11:09

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02142-1115

May 23, 2008

Ms. Margaret Drury  
City Clerk  
Cambridge City Council  
Cambridge City Hall  
795 Massachusetts, Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Ms. Drury:

Recently, it came to my attention that a resolution has been made to the Cambridge City Council to change the name of Plympton Street in Harvard Square to Halberstam Street in honor of my cousin David. David's affect on a generation of journalists and writers is inestimable. While I think it likely that he would have scoffed at such an idea, I am certain he is worthy and would have felt truly honored. Please accept this letter in support of the resolution.

Sincerely,

Michael Halberstam  
President

2008 MAY 27 A 11:09

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# Cambridge African American Heritage Alliance

Established in 1991

## Petition to the Cambridge City Council to change the Name of Plympton Street to Halberstam Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts

As members of the Cambridge African American Heritage Alliance we support the proposal before the Cambridge City Council to rename Plympton Street for David J. Halberstam.

In his first job out of Harvard College, David Halberstam went south to report on the civil rights movement reporting on the bravery of black youth as they demonstrated to integrate rest rooms and lunch counters. He wrote about the achievements of those youth in his book, *The Children*. David Halberstam was also fearless in reporting to local audiences on the facts of white racism in Mississippi.

In addition to his journalistic leadership in reporting on the civil rights movement, David Halberstam won a Pulitzer Prize for his writing from the field about the Vietnam war. His interviews from the trenches about what was really going on in that war infuriated the top command. Washington tried unsuccessfully to get the New York Times to remove him from that assignment.

Halberstam's courage in publicizing the the two most important issues of his and our time: institutional racism and mistaken wars represents the values many in our Alliance feel Cambridge should take into account as it names streets in our city. David Halberstam conducted his life in a way that we would hope others in Cambridge and beyond would emulate.

Sincerely yours,

*Jo gueline d. Dyer*  
*[Signature]*  
*Surjan G. Chandy*  
*Warren M. Smith*

*J. [Signature]*  
*[Signature]*  
*Takako Sato Salva*  
*LeRay Casagrande*

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
2008 SEP - 9 P 5: 20

copy for Margaret Drury 3

**John G. Wofford**  
13 Cottage Street, Cambridge, MA 02139  
Email: johnwofford@earthlink.net Fax: 617-661-3201

Phone: 617-661-1466

for your info, jgw

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
FEB 18 10 30 AM '09

February 18, 2009

Cambridge City Council  
City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Members of the City Council:

I write as a Cambridge resident of 21 years and as a former editor and president of *The Harvard Crimson* to oppose the renaming of Plympton Street for David Halberstam, Class of 1955.

I was elected to *The Crimson* in May of 1954 during my freshman year at Harvard College. David was Managing Editor at the time, responsible for production of its six issues a week. Along with several others, he managed my competition to join the staff as a member of the Editorial Board. The competition required that I write at least three significant pieces each week for many months, and David reviewed many of them with his red pencil poised. I learned a great deal about writing from him. I also learned a lot about David as leader, journalist and professional. Later I served as president in 1956-57, and kept in touch with David from time to time thereafter.

David, I believe, would not want Plympton Street renamed in his honor. In his role as Managing Editor, he was always a team player, giving prominence to other writers. It was clear during his time on *The Crimson* that he was dedicated to finding the truth through vigorous investigative journalism that would represent the best of the paper as an institution. As a mentor, he always conveyed that the high standards of that institution bound us together and were much more important than individual recognition.

I can imagine David hearing about the proposal to rename Plympton Street in his honor, squinting his eyes with a sardonic half-grin, and saying "Name the street after me? No, I don't think so!"

Aside from what I believe would be David's own opposition to the idea, there are too many other *Crimson* editors who have made large contributions to journalism and society to single out David for this kind of recognition, including at least nine Pulitzer Prizewinners. Perhaps lesser known but important editors from the 1950's who recently have died include Jay Iselin, pioneer of public television as 14-year president of Channel 13 in New York – originator of "Great Performances," "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour," "Bill Moyers Journal," "Live from Lincoln Center," etc.; Kenneth Auchincloss, long-time editor of *Newsweek*; and J. Anthony Lucas, reporter and author of *Common Ground*, the penetrating account of school integration in Boston. *The Crimson* as an institution was key to the nurturing of these and many others.

I believe that *The Crimson* at its best contributes both to the university and to the City as a whole. Perhaps the alley next to the *Crimson* Building at 14 Plympton Street should be named "Harvard *Crimson* Alley." The *Crimson* has occupied that building for 94 years, since 1915, and expects to stay there. That could be a suitable way to recognize the paper as a valuable local institution.

Sincerely,

John G. Wofford

Statement of Francis H. Duehay, 26 Lowell Street, Cambridge MA 02138

Cambridge City Council, March 23, 2008

My statement has to do with the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Rules, concerning the proposal of mine and others to rename Plympton Street for David Halberstam, who died in an automobile accident in 2007. I understand that the measure is still within the province of the Committee.

I shall not repeat here in full the reasons for the proposal. Those arguments are made in the body of the motion before the Committee, namely that David Halberstam, who started his career in Cambridge as Managing Editor of the Harvard Crimson, went on to become the foremost journalist of his generation.

In taking on state-sanctioned injustice and racism in his reporting from the South immediately after college, David boldly and courageously confronted the central domestic issue of the country.

Later, in writing about Vietnam, Korea and Washington, David told the stories of failed American foreign policy, uncovering the truth to challenge power. David Filkins of the New York Times has said that Iraq war correspondents regard David as their "patron saint."

The proposal to rename Plympton Street for him is to recognize his stature, to inspire others, and to remind citizens, including Harvard students who live nearby, of the immense effect one journalist has had on history.

At the Committee hearing and in other correspondence, objections have been made to the renaming.

Several have said that David would not have wanted it. There really is no way of knowing that, since others think otherwise. In any event, a thoughtful proposal has been made and the Council has the obligation of considering it in the light of what values it wishes to recognize in the naming of a public street.

A second objection was that the Council has no criteria for the renaming of streets and that it isn't done very often. Were criteria to be developed, I would argue, it is very likely that the Halberstam proposal would meet them. The fact that few streets have been renamed recently is not a convincing reason to reject a proposal to honor a person whose influence on history is so profound.

Another objection was that there are other Harvard alumni and other citizens who are more or equally qualified. While this may be true, David Halberstam would still rank in the top tier and proposals can always be made for others. It is not a good reason for inaction on this proposal.

Some have objected that there is a sentimental reason for keeping the present name. Here I think it is clear that history outweighs sentiment.

It was said that the city and other occupants of the street will incur expenses. This is true but I believe that these will not be major.

Finally, a proposal has been made to rename part of the street commemoratively, that is, an honorary naming placed on the signpost below the real name, as is done in New York City.

I and others believe this idea diminishes the significance of the renaming and should not be substituted for the main proposal. The photos from New York City also show the cluttered and perhaps confusing outcome of this policy, and I wonder whether the Council really wishes to move in this direction.

We urge the Council Committee and the Council to act positively in this matter.

March 23, 2009

Councillor Craig Kelley  
Cambridge City Hall  
Central Square  
Cambridge MA 02139

Re: Request to remove Zani memorial sign in front of 144 Pemberton Street

Dear Councillor Kelley:

We have spoken about the above and I am now writing to express my concerns. You will see, enclosed, a letter I am sending to the Zani family.

While I certainly respect the memory of Cesar and Florence Zani and am grateful to have had them as neighbors for the thirty-plus years I have lived on Pemberton Street, I am, in the extreme, displeased about the sign. My reasons are these:

1. No notice was given about a plan to install the sign or about the date and time of its installation nor was there an opportunity to object to the same.
2. I find it to be an unwelcome visual and physical imposition in the landscape.
3. If all long-time residents were to be so honored, the corner would be little forest of memorial signs: at least four other families' names come readily to mind.
4. The Zani family and families of other dear departed presumably have burial places which serve for their remembrance.
5. The practice of naming somewhat random bits of city property after deceased residents seems to be entirely out of control. Of course, directional and informational signs are helpful but the numerous memorial signs, other than those for fallen servicemen and women, strike me as odd and unfortunate.

You might suppose that I would want the corner by my house named after me. Nothing could be further from the truth. On several occasions I have told my sons that I want nothing named after me.

I would like the 'Zani Square' sign preferably removed or at least relocated away from my property at the earliest opportunity. I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Eve Sullivan / TEL: 617 - 253-7182 day # / EMAIL: [annals@mit.edu](mailto:annals@mit.edu)

LETTER SENT March 23, 2009 TO The Zani Family, 156 Pemberton Street  
Dear Angela and Family,

I am writing with considerable confusion and regret, but I want you to read this from me directly, rather than second hand. I have thought long and hard about this. Acknowledging the distress that my request may cause you, I nonetheless decided to go forward with my appeal to the City Council to have the sign removed. You can read, attached, my letter to City Councilor Craig Kelley. In it I explain my reasons, from specific to general, for making this request.

Very truly yours,  
Eve Sullivan, 144 Pemberton Street, Cambridge MA 02140