



## FACT SHEET

*Renaming of South 32nd Avenue to Benschoter Avenue (**prounounced Ben-Scooter**)*

**Date:** Sunday, September 29, 2024

**Time:** 10:45 a.m.

**Location:** South 32nd Avenue, between Frances Street and Martha Street, Omaha, NE

### Why this corner?

Though neither Benny nor Reba were Omaha natives, they made the city their home and dedicated their time outside of work to making it a better place. They were devoted members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. Through their more than 60 years as members of the parish, they organized events, cleaned, and renovated the church campus's most beloved spaces, gave and raised funds for critical initiatives, and served as trusted advisors for the church's leadership and clergy. There does not seem to be a single space or activity within the parish that was not touched by Benny and Reba's care and attention. For this reason, we have requested the section of South 32 Avenue in front of the church be renamed for them.

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### Why the Renaming?

- Benny and Reba were integral to the Omaha community through their work, volunteerism, and support of education and healthcare.
- The renaming recognizes their dedication to making Omaha a better place, particularly through their involvement in Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and various charitable efforts.

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### Event Overview

- **What:** A commemorative renaming of a section of South 32nd Avenue to "Benschoter Avenue."
- **Purpose:** To honor the legacy of Leon "Benny" and Reba Benschoter for their significant contributions to the Omaha community in broadcasting, education, healthcare, and public service.

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### About Benny Benschoter

- **Born:** Algona, Iowa
- **Education:** Bachelor's Degree from Iowa State University (1953), Master's Degree from the University of Nebraska Omaha (1973)
- **Key Achievements:**
  - Pioneered color television at KMTV, America's first privately-owned color TV station.

- Directed the launch of KYNE TV, Omaha's first public television station.
  - Joined Creighton University, founding the Department of Medical Television, later known as Biomedical Communications.
  - Served as Vice President for Information Services at Creighton University, where he championed campus-wide technology improvements, including internet access in residence halls.
  - Received the Distinguished Faculty/Administrator Award (1996) and the Golden Raster Award from the Health and Sciences Communications Association (HESCA).
  - **Community Involvement:** Devoted member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, volunteer with Lauritzen Botanical Gardens, Stephen Center, Elkhorn Valley Antique Tractor Club, and AARP.
  - **Passed Away:** December 3, 2021
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### About Reba Benschoter

- **Born:** Smithland, Iowa
- **Education:** Bachelor's Degree from Briar Cliff College, Master's Degree from Iowa State University, Doctorate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (1978)
- **Key Achievements:**
  - Director of the Nebraska Psychiatric Institute (NPI) teaching division, later appointed as the first Director of UNMC's Biomedical Communications Division.
  - Pioneered telemedicine by leading the first U.S. two-way closed-circuit telemedicine system in 1964.
  - Played a key role in expanding health services to rural Nebraska, including the development of the NEB\*SAT satellite communication system.
  - Served as associate dean for the School of Allied Health Professions, increasing programs and student enrollment to address healthcare professional shortages.
  - Recipient of the Golden Raster Award (with Benny) from HESCA.
- **Community Involvement:** Active in volunteerism at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, AARP, Stephen Center, and supporter of numerous Omaha charities and organizations.
- **Passed Away:** January 1, 2023