

MOTION

Shindana Toys, founded by civil rights activists Louis Smith and Robert Hall, was a toy company that reigned from South Los Angeles during the mid-20th Century. As a response to the 1965 Watts Riots, Smith and Hall created Operation Bootstrap to help address longstanding systemic inequality and neglect amongst Black residents in South Los Angeles. In 1968, Shindana Toys was birthed from the endeavors sought out by Operation Bootstrap and focused on three main objectives: fostering self-love and empathy by creating Black toys for Black children and others, implementing more jobs into the Black community, and using profits to uplift and improve the community's quality of life.

Upon the formation of Shindana Toys, Smith and Hall successfully entered into a groundbreaking partnership with Mattel, Inc. who provided factory training, supplies, industry contacts, and capital. Subsequently, Shindana Toys was able to provide much-needed jobs for the South Los Angeles community from its location at 6107 S. Central Avenue, in addition to creative Black toys, games, and dolls for children.

By 1969, The Shindana Toy Company became a global phenomenon and produced an estimated 130,000 dolls for children across the United States, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, and Europe. The sales of their popular "Baby Nancy" doll generated most of the revenue for Operation Bootstrap and provided Shindana employees with greater job security. Additionally, the company often commissioned local Black entrepreneurs to design, manufacture, and sew original doll clothes.

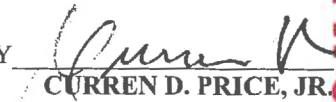
As the company grew, Shindana Toys launched several lines of Black dolls, action figures, plushies, board and card games that emphasized positive representations of Black livelihood, aspirations, history, and pop culture. The company's mission was to distribute playthings to teach young Black children to love themselves, as well as to teach children from other ethnicities to love those different from themselves.

Shindana Toys closed in 1983 due to financial issues, yet, the company's diverse lines of dolls, toys, and games will forever expand the possibilities of play by allowing Black children to see themselves reflected on store shelves, rebuilding and uplifting an entire community in the process.

In recognition of the legacy and cultural impact that Louis Smith and Robert Hall has made locally, nationwide, and globally for decades, and to ensure that this piece of Los Angeles and Black history be preserved, it is appropriate that the City name the intersection of Central Avenue and 61st Street as the "Shindana Toys Square".

I THEREFORE MOVE that the intersection of Central Avenue and 61st Street be named as "Shindana Toys Square" and that the Department of Transportation be directed to erect permanent ceremonial sign(s) to this effect at this location.

PRESENTED BY


CURREN D. PRICE, JR.
Councilmember, 9th District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL

OCT 25 2024

