

MOTION

Ben Caldwell is an esteemed filmmaker, multimedia artist, and revered community elder whose profound impact on the Leimert Park community and the City of Los Angeles is immeasurable. His journey into the world of visual arts began at an early age, helping his grandfather project movies in a small New Mexico theater, an experience that ignited a lifelong affinity for filmmaking. This passion was further solidified during his service in Vietnam, where he documented the lives of his fellow soldiers, an act that not only familiarized him with the medium but also laid the groundwork for his future work focusing on social issues.

After his service, Caldwell pursued his education at UCLA, where he received his M.F.A. in film in 1976. It was here that he became a founding member of the "L.A. Rebellion," a groundbreaking movement of African American filmmakers who sought to "emancipate the image" of Black people from the stereotypes prevalent in the film industry. Alongside other visionaries like Charles Burnett and Julie Dash, he created culturally-focused and experimental films such as "Madea," "I & I: An African Allegory," and "Water Ritual #1," which explored the depth of Black culture in Los Angeles. Caldwell's artistic philosophy, which he describes as creating "cultural" rather than "political" films, is rooted in the belief that his art should bring people closer together and capture the natural flavor of Black music and the unique culture of the African Diaspora.

Beyond his filmmaking, Caldwell's most enduring legacy is the KAOS Network, a community arts center he founded in 1984 in the heart of Leimert Park. Through KAOS Network, Ben has spent decades mentoring generations of Black artists, creatives, and technologists—uplifting cultural narratives and building vital creative infrastructure in South Central Los Angeles. His influence spans film, technology, public art, and youth education, leaving an indelible mark on the cultural landscape of Leimert Park and beyond.

Through his tireless advocacy and his leadership in community initiatives like the Festival of Masks and the Sankofa Walk, Ben Caldwell has solidified his role not only as a wise elder but also as a culture maker, community voice, and torchbearer for generations to come. His artistic and philanthropic contributions continue to serve the people of Leimert Park, Los Angeles and the World.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the intersection at Leimert Boulevard and 43rd Place be named as "**Ben Caldwell Square**" and that the Department of Transportation be directed to erect permanent ceremonial sign(s) to this effect at this location.

PRESENTED BY:



HEATHER HUTT

Councilmember, 10th DistrictSECONDED BY: 

ORIGINAL

AUG 6 2025
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