

Reframed

• Love 'em or hate 'em, our names can stir up strong feelings. We asked readers to tell us about their relationship with their names.

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HOW TO CHANGE YOUR NAME

Changing your name is easy in Minnesota, unless you're in prison or a felon. Here's what you'll need: **Form.** Your county courthouse can give you two forms you need to complete: an application for name change, to be signed in front of a notary, and an order for name change to be signed by the judge. No lawyer necessary. **Proof of residency.** You'll need to prove you lived in Minnesota for six months and are a resident of the county in which you apply, both at time of application and of the eventual hearing before a judge or referee.

Two adult witnesses. Bring people who have known you for at least one year. They may be relatives.

If you are married, one of the two should be your spouse.

Filing fee. The process currently costs about \$250. There may be a small additional court services fee.

Fees may be waived for those with limited incomes.

The judge will ask you and your witnesses questions regarding your background and desire to change your name. Under Minnesota law, the judge must grant your request, unless he or she believes you are trying to mislead or defraud others. The process generally takes only a few minutes.

When she was a child, Kassia Becker, 34, of Minneapolis, hated her first name. But she loves it now. Mercer Hill, of St. Louis Park, hated her first name when she was a child and still hates it at 71. Armon Ross, 66, of Eden Prairie, would like you to know she's not a man. And Marian Mildred Winter Johnson, 60, of Bloomington, would like to know: What were her parents thinking? (About Marian Mildred, anyway.)

Eunice Gladem, 53, of Minneapolis, changed her first name to Marit after someone called her "Uterus." Ernie Gulner kept his name even though his immigrant grandmother called him "Urin." And Andrew Putz, the new editor of Minnesota

Monthly, hopes you don't speak Yiddish.

Byron Anfinson, 41, of Minneapolis, calls his name "built-in dyslexia." Lynne Diercks, 60, of Burnsville, vowed she would never marry boyfriend Mark Lind, but did. She's been Lynne Lind for 39 years. And Pete P. Peter, 49, of Chanhassen, can top that.

What's in a name? Fierce pride, flat-out embarrassment, annoyance and amusement, creativity and history. No matter how ordinary or how unusual their names, everyone, it seems, has something to say about them.

Names continues: Some bemoan the ordinariness of their names. **►**
Inside: How to change your name. **►**

"I have always loved my first and middle names, because they both sound pretty," wrote April Candace Hawkins Kovacovich, 47, of Brooklyn Park, in an e-mail. "My mother was the creative person who came up with them, partly because she liked spring ... Most people think they know when my birthday is, though it really is in October!"

"I HATE my name," said Wynn Burg, of Burnsville, who's lived with Wynn (and Wean, Wayne, Wine, Gwen, Wendy and Winnie) for 55 years. "For 50 of those years, I have had to pronounce, explain and spell my name to everyone and anyone. I would be so happy to have a normal name, something that everyone, when they heard it, would know exactly, say, what SEX I am!" Her advice to parents, in case you didn't get her drift: "Don't give your child a stupid name!"

Too weird, too common

Many adults said the last thing they wanted to do as kids was stand out. Josué Javier Castillo, 45, grew up in Texas. It wasn't until he moved to Minnesota for college that he had to say over and over, "It's ho-SWAY, not ho-ZAY." Still, he likes all parts of it. Castillo, he noted, is Spanish for castle. "How cool is that?"

Daniel K. Pavak, 64, of St. Paul, said that even her dad couldn't spell her first name right. Kay Loire Roseland, 59, of Richfield didn't learn how to correctly pronounce her middle name until a freshman French class in college.

Everyone always spelled the first name of Karin Olson, 59, of south Minneapolis, with an "e." And Hettianne Cekalla, 52, of Plymouth, grew up enduring the nickname "Headless."

On the other hand, some readers bemoaned the ordinariness of their names: the Johns and Bobs, Cathys, Rebeccas and Jennifers, the Lindas and Ashley's. To avoid a similar fate, Ashley Fairbanks, 19, named her own daughter Ivivian. "I don't think she will like it when she is older," Fairbanks said, "but I like it."

Many readers shared sweet stories about how they got their names. Annoyed by them at first, they softened up when those tales were told. Beata Rydeen, 57, of



ORPACH LEANNE JUNGCLAUS

Age: 68. Name says: Almost famous.

Minneapolis, has to spell and pronounce her first name nearly every day (it's Bee-ah-ta). Her mother worked for a family with a daughter of that name and learned that it means "blessed" from the Beatitudes in the Bible. "It's unique, it's different, it's fun to say."

Making peace with a name

When Constance Stromberg, 56, of Burnsville got married, she wanted to take her beloved's name, Olson, but bemoaned losing her Swedish family name, meaning "stream by a mountain." She "bought it back for a \$125 application fee," and is now happily, and legally, Constance Stromberg Olson.

Sarah Zaug (dog, hog, frog) of Golden Valley endured years of teasing by classmates but, at 29, she likes her name and the nicknames it inspires. "A woman at my work has taken to calling me the Zaugster ... pretty sweet!"

Shona Docker, 44, of Roseville, said she was saved from being named "a run-of-the-mill Kimberly Ann," when her pregnant mother and father were watching "Gunsmoke." One of the characters was an American Indian woman named "Shon-na," pronounced Show-na. She loves her name and her story, especially when people of a certain age say, "Lucky you weren't a boy, or you'd be Festus."

Then there are those with potentially

Don't like it? Change it

If you really hate your name you can change it easily in Minnesota. (See accompanying story.) Many readers have done it to escape a name they hate, to have a name that better fits their persona, or to make a statement about someone or something they hold dear.

Paul Fishman, 51, and Paula Goodman, 50, of St. Paul took the last name Maccabee, the heroes of the Hanukkah story, at their June 1980 wedding. The name was chosen, said Paul Maccabee, owner of the Maccabee Group public relations firm, "as a tribute to our Israeli-Jewish heritage and our respective professions." At the time, Paula was a litigator frequently representing the little guy and Paul was an investigative reporter.

Fiamma di Gioia (nee Wanda Koeninger) paid \$50 for her new name in 1976. After her divorce, she wanted a new start. "I love my name," said di Gioia, 68, of Lindstrom, Minn. "It means 'flame of joy' in Italian."

Mhdlon (pronounced Madeline) Madcap, 57, of Prior Lake, made up her name about a decade ago, never feeling her parents got it quite right with Cheryl Reis. Sometimes, she regrets the change because it's so hard for people to spell. "A lot of people want to buy me a vowel," she said. "I then she points out the obvious advantage: 'I am the one and only Mhdlon Madcap.'"

Putz, too, sees the benefits of his family name, which he's never considered changing. "People don't forget it," he said. "On that level, it's been ... I don't think the word would be beneficial. But it hasn't hurt."

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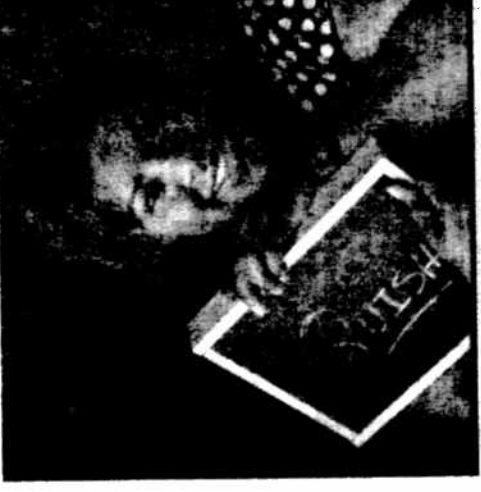
PETER P. PSTIER
Age: 49. Name says: Fun!



HADDAYE COPLEY-WOODS
Age: 36. Name says: I'm a patient woman.



JOURNEY ROSBERG
Age: 8. Name says: Life will be a trip.



QUERA TURNER
Age: 31. Name says: It's 'Quera,' not the egg dish.



BEE BARTH SHAVER
Age: 62. Name says: Busy as a ...



GAYLORD ANTHONY ANOKA
Age: 48. Name says: Minnesota (city) through and through.



MHDLON MADCAP
Age: 57. Name says: The one and only.



FIANNA DI GIOIA
Age: 68. Name says: Flame of joy.