

**RESOLUTION NO. RS2018-1119**

**A resolution recognizing and honoring "The Nashville 16" students who desegregated Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools.**

WHEREAS, in September of 1957, three years after the United States Supreme Court declared school segregation laws unconstitutional, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools implemented a comprehensive "stairstep plan" to desegregate schools beginning with the first grade, and extending to all grades in 1968; and

WHEREAS, this desegregation plan began with sixteen African-American first graders known as "The Nashville 16": Errol Groves, Ethel Mai Carr and Patricia Guthrie of Buena Vista Elementary; Barbara Jean Watson, Marvin Moore, Charles Edward Battles, and Cecil Ray, Jr. of Jones Elementary; Charles Elbert Ridley, Willis Edgar Lewis, Jr., Linda McKinley, and Rita Buchanan of Fehr Elementary; Jacqueline Griffith, Lajuanda Street, and Sinclair Lee, Jr. of Glenn Elementary; Joy Smith of Clemons Elementary; and Patricia Watson of Hattie Cotton Elementary; and

WHEREAS, these sixteen courageous students made history by being the first African-American children to desegregate Nashville's schools; and

WHEREAS, as a result of their bravery, today's students have access to excellent public education and the opportunity to create and chase their dreams; and

WHEREAS, on February, 26, 2018, "The Nashville 16" was honored at a special event entitled, "*Because of You Celebration*", where these local heroes of desegregation were recognized by School Board Members, local officials, principals and students; and

WHEREAS, sixty years after this pivotal moment in history, Metro Nashville Public Schools has formed community partnerships to capture oral histories and curate them in the Civil Rights Room at the Downtown Public Library, as well as pursue the creation of a documentary about the events of September 9, 1957; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council recognize and honor "The Nashville 16" for their courageous and remarkable actions which forever changed the history of Nashville's school system, and the city of Nashville, for the better.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. The Metropolitan Council hereby goes on record as recognizing and honoring the "The Nashville 16" students who desegregated Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools.

Section 2. That Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

INTRODUCED BY:

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Karen Y. Johnson

