

RESOLUTION NO. RS2018-1414

A resolution honoring the service and legacy of Charles Frederick ("Charlie") Strobel upon the 35th anniversary of the founding of Loaves & Fishes, a homeless feeding program he established together with Room in the Inn.

WHEREAS, on March 12, 1943, Charles Frederick ("Charlie") Strobel was born on Seventh Avenue North in Germantown, then a working-class Nashville neighborhood filled with multi-generational families. He was the third of four children born to Martin and Mary Catherine Strobel; and

WHEREAS, Charlie Strobel's father, Martin, an employee of the Nashville Fire Department, passed away when Charlie was only three years old, leaving his widowed mother to raise four children ranging in age from 18 months to 8 years; and

WHEREAS, Charlie Strobel attended elementary school at Church of the Assumption in Germantown, dreaming of one day becoming a professional baseball player and frequently attending minor league games at Sulphur Dell, the city's ballpark located just three blocks from his boyhood home; and

WHEREAS, Charlie Strobel graduated from Father Ryan High School in 1961. Answering a higher calling than baseball, he entered the seminary at St. Mary's College in Kentucky in pursuit of the priesthood. Afterward, he attended graduate school at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., and

WHEREAS, on July 31, 1970, Charlie Strobel was ordained into the priesthood at the Cathedral of the Incarnation and later assigned to Immaculate Conception parish in Knoxville as associate pastor. In 1975, he returned to Nashville as associate pastor of Holy Rosary in Donelson before being named pastor of Holy Name Catholic Church -- one of Nashville's poorest congregations where the homeless often sought refuge and support; and

WHEREAS, beginning in the early 1980s, changes in national policies resulted in funding cuts to programs for the poor, mental health patients, veterans, and others in need, exacerbating the plight of those already destitute. Working with Margaret Don at St. Henry's parish, Strobel helped establish a simple soup kitchen with the assistance of other congregations, creating what came to be known as the Loaves and Fishes feeding program; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, the Army Corps of Engineers eradicated a homeless encampment located on the banks of the Cumberland River just five blocks from Holy Name Catholic Church. With winter approaching, Strobel witnessed the sudden displacement of individuals from even the most rudimentary of shelters. Without hesitation, he invited the displaced to spend the night inside Holy Name Church. That single night continued into the next, and eventually lasted through the entire winter. Recognizing the long-term need, Strobel wrote a letter to the editor of *The Tennessean* and *The Nashville Banner*, proposing that Nashville's houses of worship open their doors to the homeless population. The letters were published, and by Thanksgiving of 1986, four other congregations had joined Strobel's efforts, thereby establishing what came to be known as Room in the Inn; and

WHEREAS, over the years, Room in the Inn grew from its humble beginnings to provide shelter for approximately 1,500 members of the Nashville homeless population by coordinating over 200 Nashville-area congregations and more than 7,000 volunteers; and

WHEREAS, on September 29, 2018, Holy Name Catholic Church and Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Inc. will host a reception in honor of the 35th Anniversary of Loaves and Fishes. And on this same occasion, the parish center of Holy Name Catholic Church (and the home of Loaves and Fishes) will be formally named "Strobel Hall"; and

WHEREAS, while the likelihood of Charlie Strobel playing for a major league baseball team appears increasingly elusive, Nashvillians have been far more blessed by his legacy of kindness and compassion for the benefit of those less fortunate; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council honor the service, career, and legacy of Charles Strobel, and express its sincere gratitude to him and to his family.

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

Section 1. The Metropolitan County Council hereby goes on record as honoring the community and humanitarian service and legacy of Charles Strobel.

Section 2. The Metropolitan Council Office is directed to prepare a copy of this Resolution to be presented to Charles Strobel.

Section 3. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

INTRODUCED BY:

Brett Withers

Freddie O'Connell

Burkley Allen

Members of Council