

RESOLUTION NO. RS2018-1431

A resolution recognizing the legacy of prominent Nashville artist, William Edmondson, as part of National Arts and Humanities Month.

WHEREAS, October is National Arts and Humanities Month, launched by Americans for the Arts more than 30 years ago with the goals of bring focus to the arts at local, state, and national levels; encouraging individuals and organizations to participate in the arts; providing opportunities for governments and businesses to show their support of the arts; and raising public awareness about the role arts and humanities play in our communities and lives; and

WHEREAS, National Arts and Humanities Month presents an opportunity to recognize the legacy of prominent Nashville artist, William Edmondson; and

WHEREAS, William Edmondson was born in and created his art work in Davidson County, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Edmondson and grew up in what was once a rural part of the county on the Compton plantation, where his parents had been enslaved and later worked as sharecroppers; and

WHEREAS, Edmondson had little or no formal education, and working at the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad shops, and the Nashville Women's Hospital, he ultimately earned enough to purchase a modest home in the Edgehill Neighborhood of Nashville; and

WHEREAS, Edmondson began his sculpting career by creating tombstones for Nashville's African-American community from chunks of discarded limestone, and then later, in 1934 around the age of 60, transitioned to figure sculpture; and

WHEREAS, Edmondson's work caught the attention of many in the Nashville community and later, the director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City; and

WHEREAS, in 1937, William Edmondson was the first African-American artist to be given a one-person exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, and he later went on to showcase his artwork in Paris, France as part of the "Three Centuries of Art in the United States" exhibition at the Jeu de Paume; and

WHEREAS, after Edmondson's death in 1951, his sculptures came to be appreciated by art critics and collectors around the world, garnering \$70,000-\$300,000 at auction; and

WHEREAS, locally, Edmondson's work has been exhibited at Fisk University, the Tennessee State Museum, and Cheekwood Museum of Art; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Nashville Metropolitan Government opened Edmondson Park, the city's first urban arts park named in honor of Edmondson; and

WHEREAS, William Edmondson is hailed as one of the outstanding folk artists of the Twentieth Century; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council raise awareness about National Arts and Humanities Month, and highlight the artistic contributions of William Edmondson as part of the month-long celebration of the arts.

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 October as National Arts and Humanities Month and honors the legacy of Nashville artist William Edmondson.

Section 2. 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:

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