

RESOLUTION NO. RS2018-____

A resolution honoring the life, legacy, and contributions of Richard H. Fulton, former congressman and mayor of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee.

WHEREAS, on November 28, 2018, Nashville lost one of its most influential leaders, Richard Harmon Fulton; and

WHEREAS, born and raised in East Nashville, Fulton attended Warner Elementary and graduated from East High School where he excelled as a football star, eventually attending the University of Tennessee on a football scholarship; and

WHEREAS, before attending college, however, Fulton served his country in the United States Navy during World War II aboard the naval ship USS O'Hare; and

WHEREAS, after attending college, Fulton returned home to East Nashville where he helped his brother Lyle Fulton operate a neighborhood market and pursue other business ventures; and

WHEREAS, in 1954, Fulton was elected to the Tennessee State Senate after the untimely death of his brother Lyle who tragically succumbed to liver cancer after securing the Democratic nomination for the seat. However, at age 29, Fulton fell below the minimum age for senators required under the Tennessee Constitution and was unseated by a vote of the Tennessee Senate, only to successfully run for the same seat two years later. Fulton served in the Tennessee Senate from 1956 until 1963; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, Fulton entered the Democratic primary for the 5th U.S. Congressional District in Nashville. After the incumbent congressman was initially declared the winner, corruption was reported at the election commission and Fulton successfully sued to throw out the primary results. In a repeat primary election, Fulton was elected to the United States House of Representatives where he served for seven terms until 1975; and

WHEREAS, while in Congress, Fulton took courageous – often isolating – positions on controversial issues of the day, casting one of the few “yea” votes among Southern congressional representatives in support of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Fulton also supported the Voting Rights Act, the Fair Housing Act, and the Medicare Act. His campaigns were among the first in Nashville to prioritize support within the African-American community, and he was the first member of Tennessee’s delegation to hire African-American staff members; and

WHEREAS, in 1975, Fulton was elected as Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, serving as only the second mayor of the consolidated local government until 1987; and

WHEREAS, during his mayoral terms, Fulton forged a pro-business, socially progressive agenda -- an approach that proved influential among Nashville’s successive mayors. Fulton focused on the development of downtown, including the construction of Riverfront Park and the Nashville Convention Center, the redevelopment of key downtown streets, as well as the preservation of Union Station and the Hermitage Hotel. He also was influential in the construction of Interstate 440, the expansion of the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency, and the addition of 485 acres to Nashville’s parks system; and

WHEREAS, after leaving office in 1987, Fulton pursued a successful career in business and real estate, opening a consulting firm and serving as a founding member of the Bank of Nashville; and

WHEREAS, on November 28, 2018, at the age of 91, Fulton passed away peacefully in his sleep, leaving behind an enduring legacy of courageous yet gracious public service at the local, state, and federal levels which truly transformed Nashville for the better.

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

Section 1. That the Metropolitan Council hereby goes on record as honoring the life, legacy, and enormous contributions of former congressman and Mayor of Nashville and Davidson County, Richard Harmon Fulton.

Section 2. The Metropolitan Clerks Office is requested to send a copy of this Resolution to Sandra Fulton, beloved and devoted wife of Richard H. Fulton.

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:

Kathleen Murphy

Bob Mendes
Members of Council