

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION BY THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA, SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF A TASK FORCE TO HONOR THE LIFE OF REVEREND DR. HOSEA LORENZO WILLIAMS, SR. AND RECOGNIZING HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS WORTHY OF AN ENDURING MEMORIAL

Whereas, Reverend Dr. Hosea Lorenzo Williams, Sr. was a Georgia-born and educated, resident of DeKalb County for 35 years, residing at 8 East Lake Drive and 2588 Hosea Williams Drive until he passed in 2000; and

Whereas, He gave up his career as a Research Chemist for the United States Department of Agriculture to join the Executive Staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) at the request of its president, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

Whereas, Hosea, L. Williams, Sr. became a prolific organizer of campaigns for justice and the only prominent civil rights leader to work in the trenches in the two campaigns that led to the most significant legislation produced by the modern-day Civil Rights Movement; and

Whereas, He was SCLC Field Staff Director in Saint Augustine, Florida campaign that pushed the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and as the March Director, he did the groundwork for the Selma to Montgomery March that pushed passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Bill; and

Whereas, Hosea Lorenzo Williams, Sr. never ceased serving the citizens of the county, the city, the state, and the nation as one of America's most persistent, consistent, and vocal Voting and Civil Rights leaders in the struggle to make America live up to its creed of equality and equity for all; and

Whereas, during his distinguished political career, he served DeKalb County at every level of elected representation - Georgia House of Representatives for five terms (1974-85), the Atlanta City Council representing DeKalb residents living in Atlanta (1985-90), and DeKalb County Commissioner (1990- 94); and

Whereas, Hosea Lorenzo Williams, Sr. considered his greatest accomplishment to be founding "Hosea Feed the Hungry and Homeless" in 1971 as a way to fulfill Dr. King's wish articulated in his last speech—that he be eulogized not for his degrees, awards, or Nobel Peace Prize but because "*I fed the hungry and clothed the naked*"

Whereas, the first meals served to one hundred homeless men were prepared at 8 East Lake Dr. by the Honorable Jaunita Terry Williams, and a few volunteers, using her vegetable soup recipe, served with cornbread at the Wheat Street Baptist Church Educational Building; and

Whereas, from that humble DeKalb beginning, the organization grew into one of the largest direct-to-client food service agencies in the country with a roster of nearly two thousand volunteers; and

Whereas, to prepare the massive amount of food needed to serve thousands at the organization's signature Holiday Dinners, Hosea and veteran volunteers were allowed into the area's largest commercial kitchen in the area—the DeKalb County Jail; and

Whereas, the Williams Family home at 8 East Lake Dr. served as a way station for Freedom Fighters and a site for planning sixties demonstrations, seventies strikes, and eighties campaigns. And, before he died in 2000 Hosea Lorenzo Williams, Sr. turned over the property to the Martin Luther King, Jr. People's Church of Love, doing business as "Hosea Feed the Hungry and Homeless;" and

Whereas, this part of the Williams legacy is known today as Hosea Helps, INC. to reflect its wide-ranging social mission in support of the thousands of people in metropolitan Atlanta and other service providers across the state. During its fifty-one-year history, 30 to 40 percent of the clients served annually have been DeKalb County citizens; and

Whereas, Hosea Lorenzo Williams, Sr. was active in the DeKalb business community as an entrepreneur and businessman, Hosea's Bonding Company continues to operate as a successful enterprise. It was preceded by the Southeastern Chemical Manufacturing and Distribution Company headquartered in the Kirkwood area; and

Whereas, on January 5, 2020, "Hosea Williams: a Lifetime of Defiance and Protest" was published by DeKalb County Schools alumnus Dr. Rolundus Rice. The definitive biography quotes the late United States Congressman John Lewis, who walked beside Hosea Williams in 1965, the march that Williams organized known worldwide as "Bloody Sunday" representing the carnage the police brutality unleashed on citizens seeking the right to vote on the Edmund Pettus bridge in Selma, Alabama; and

Whereas, according to Congressman John Lewis, "*Hosea Williams must be looked upon as one of the founding fathers of the New America, as through his actions he helped liberate all of us*"; and

Whereas, as a Lifetime Activist for the struggle for Freedom of all People, Hosea Lorenzo Williams Sr.'s work took him throughout the United States and included a Goodwill Brotherhood Tour to visit heads of State for 16 African nations, India, Japan, and South Vietnam; and

Whereas, he and the Honorable Juanita Terry Williams were United States citizens number eight and nine, respectively, to enter the People's Republic of China in 1971. He carried the agenda for equality to United States Presidents through three administrations. Yet, remained a DeKalb county resident; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Authority as follows:

1. The Reverend Dr. Hosea Lorenzo Williams, Sr.'s meritorious contributions to the United States of America and the state of Georgia, and particularly to DeKalb County, are courageous and outstanding among citizens;
2. He unselfishly sought to empower others with his magnanimous work and never stopped fighting for freedom and justice;
3. An "**Honor Hosea**" Task Force be established to engage stakeholders including but not limited to, the DeKalb SCLC, on the creation of a fitting tribute(s) to the Reverend Dr. Hosea Lorenzo Williams, Sr., that would include the erection of a statue in his memory in the plaza of the DeKalb County Courthouse so that generations to come will know of his life, his works, and that he always came home, from his battles for justice, to DeKalb County;
4. The Super District 6 Commission office will support the organizational aspects of the **Honor Hosea Task Force**, in partnership with the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners and the entire Governing Authority.

ADOPTED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this ___ day of _____, 2022.