

RESOLUTION HONORING BISHOP FRANK M. WILLIAMS

WHEREAS, on January 26, 1998, Greensboro lost an impactful religious leader and civil activist with the passing of Bishop Frank McDaniel Williams;

WHEREAS, Bishop Williams, an only child, was born May 16, 1940 in Greensboro, NC; and from the age of two years, was raised by his aunt;

WHEREAS, at age 12, he sang with a gospel quartet known as the King Star Juniors; dropped out of high school during his 10th grade year; and at age 18 devoted his life to Jesus;

WHEREAS, in 1960, Bishop Williams preached a trial sermon and received a ministerial license; at which, during this time, he met his wife and fathered two sons;

WHEREAS, active in the church as Pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, he grew the church population during his tenure; and he was also as a political community activist;

WHEREAS, after moving into the Holts Chapel Road parsonage, white supremacists launched attacks on the Williams family, which included shouting profanities, vandalized his automobile, and burned an 8-foot cross on the front lawn; however, Bishop Williams was not deterred from his mission and posed the question to his congregation: “if a man of the gospel doesn’t have the courage to stick it out, who does?”;

WHEREAS, Bishop Williams was the local lead for the Poor People’s Campaign, a political campaign brought about by the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), culminating in the Poor People’s March on Washington;

WHEREAS, he founded the incorporated Greensboro Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), wrote an autobiography titled *I’ve Come This Far*; and was among the first religious leaders onsite at the scene of the Greensboro Massacre;

WHEREAS, in collaboration with his wife and at the Pearson Street Young Women’s Christian Association, Bishop Williams founded New Jerusalem Baptist Church, now known as the New Jerusalem Cathedral and home to approximately 167 members in the early years;

WHEREAS, Bishop Williams was honored and celebrated throughout his lifetime for his religious leadership, and community activism: he was bestowed an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Baltimore Bible College; recognized by the Board of Directors of Greensboro for his work with the OIC; conferred the Order of the Long Leaf Pine by former North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt, Jr.; former Greensboro Mayor Jim Melvin proclaimed September 10, 1978 to be Frank Williams Day; and was honored via resolution by the Greensboro City Council as a recipient of the First Annual Drum Major Awards, which the Guilford County Board of Commissioners recognized via Proclamation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREENSBORO:

1. That the City Council recognizes the accomplishments, contributions, and impact of Bishop Frank McDaniel Williams locally, regionally, and nationally.
2. That a copy of this resolution shall be presented to the family of Bishop Frank McDaniel Williams as a symbol of the gratitude of the people of Greensboro for his unwavering dedication to God, civil rights, and the pursuit of success for all.