



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

File #: RS2021-713, **Version:** 1

A Resolution honoring the life of Kwame Lillard.

WHEREAS, former Metro Councilmember and civil rights leader Kwame Leo Lillard died on December 20, 2020 at the age of 81; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, Lillard advocated tirelessly for justice and equality in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, Lillard moved to Nashville, Tennessee with his family in 1943 where he attended public schools and graduated from Pearl High School in 1957; and

WHEREAS, Lillard attended A & I University (now Tennessee State University) earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1961; and

WHEREAS, while a college student, Lillard played a significant role in the management of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's Nashville Movement offices, and helped coordinate sit-ins, stand-ins, and the Freedom Rides; and

WHEREAS, Lillard was one of the sit-in protesters who, along with John Lewis, Diane Nash, and Rev. C.T. Vivian, bravely and peacefully challenged the segregation of the downtown Nashville lunch counters in 1960; and

WHEREAS, in 1961, Lillard was one of the Freedom Riders who challenged the status quo by riding interstate buses in the South in mixed racial groups in defiance of, and to bring attention to, unconstitutional local laws and customs that enforced segregation in seating; and

WHEREAS, during the 1960s sit-ins he helped organize, Lillard endured beatings, curses, and racial epithets; and

WHEREAS, Lillard subsequently moved to New York City, where he earned a Master of Science degree in Industrial Engineering from City College in 1966, and a Master of Science degree in Urban Design from Hunter College in 1971; and

WHEREAS, Lillard was co-founder of the African American Cultural Alliance in 1983, which has operated the annual African Street Festival on the Tennessee State University campus and now at Hadley Park for 37 years; and

WHEREAS, Lillard was elected to the Metropolitan Council in 1991, where he served with distinction for four years representing Council District 2, and was known to have very strong opinions regarding the operation and functioning of the Metropolitan Government; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council recognize and honor the significant contributions to equality and equity Kwame Lillard made throughout his life.

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 honoring the life of former Council Member and Civil Rights leader Kwame Leo Lillard.

Section 2. The Metropolitan Council Office is directed to prepare a copy of this Resolution to be presented to the family of Kwame Lillard.

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.