

Substitute Ordinance No. 2023-75

An ordinance to rename the Kelly Miller Smith Memorial Bridge on Jefferson Street as the “Rev. Kelly Miller Smith, Sr. Memorial Bridge ~~Rev. Kelly M. Smith Memorial Bridge~~”.

WHEREAS, the Reverend Kelly Miller Smith, Sr. arrived in Nashville in 1951 and served for decades as the pastor of First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Smith and twelve other African-Americans challenged segregation in Nashville’s public schools through a federal lawsuit filed in 1955; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Smith served as the president of the Nashville chapter of the NAACP, helped establish the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and founded the Nashville Christian Leadership Council, which worked to non-violently desegregate lunch counters, hotels, and theaters; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Smith opened the doors of First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill for workshops led by Rev. James M. Lawson that trained Nashville students such as John Lewis, Diane Nash, C.T. Vivian, and Bernard Lafayette about non-violent protest; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Smith served as an assistant dean of the Vanderbilt University Divinity School from 1969 until his death in 1984; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council previously named the reconstructed Jefferson Street Bridge as the “Kelly Miller Smith Memorial Bridge” in 1994 through Ordinance No. O94-920; and,

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council separately renamed a portion of 10th Circle North near First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill as “Rev Kelly M Smith Way” in 2020 through Ordinance No. BL2020-464; and,

WHEREAS, Section 13.26.010 of the Metropolitan Code provides that no building or structure of the Metropolitan Government may be named except pursuant to an ordinance duly adopted by the Metropolitan Council; and

WHEREAS, the community deems it appropriate that the name of the bridge be updated to more distinctly honor Rev. Smith and recognize his decades of service to Nashville and Davidson County. ~~match the recently renamed street and continued to be named in Reverend Smith’s honor.~~

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

Section 1. That the Kelly Miller Smith Memorial Bridge on Jefferson Street shall be renamed as “Rev. Kelly Miller Smith, Sr. Memorial Bridge”.

Section 2. This ordinance shall take effect immediately after its passage, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

Sponsored by:

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Jacob Kupin  
Member of Council