



# Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** RS2024-189, **Version:** 1

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A Resolution honoring the life of Bettie Kirkland.

WHEREAS, Nashville lost a champion for justice and redemption with the passing of Elizabeth “Bettie” Kirkland on October 24, 2023; and

WHEREAS, Bettie Kirkland was born on June 22, 1960 in Liberty, Missouri, graduated from Liberty High School, and majored in English and political science at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, before marrying Paul Speer and serving together in the Peace Corps in the South Pacific; and

WHEREAS, Bettie and Paul returned to the US in 1987 to attend graduate school at the University of Missouri, where Bettie attained her law degree and then joined Stinson Mag and Fizzell law firm, where she practiced environmental law; and

WHEREAS, Bettie took a hiatus from law to focus on raising two talented children, Joe and Clare in Highland Park, New Jersey, before moving to Nashville in 2001; and

WHEREAS, Bettie moved from community volunteer work to become a researcher, writer, and program creator for the historic Race Relations Institute at Fisk University and then led the First Response Center, a nonprofit organization focused on HIV/AIDS and substance abuse in the North Nashville community, a mission focus of Nashville’s Metropolitan Interdenominational Church; and

WHEREAS, Bettie was chosen in 2011 to direct Project Return, an organization dedicated to the successful new beginnings of people returning to the community after incarceration, where she served for 11 years, during which time she also attended Owen Business School at Vanderbilt for their executive Master of Business Administration program to better her skills while leading Project Return to launch PROe, PROPS, and PROh, providing revenue for the non-profit and training, employment, and housing for Project Return participants; and

WHEREAS, in each phase of her life, Bettie used her joy of life and her legal and business training for profound impact on her community and the people she loved and served.

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 celebrating the life and legacy of Bettie Kirkland.

Section 2. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.