



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

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A resolution honoring the life of Professor Vinita Davis Holman.

WHEREAS, Professor Vinita Davis Holman passed away just before 8:30 pm on December 20th, 2022, at the age of 78; and

WHEREAS, Davis Holman was born on March 2, 1944, the oldest of four children born to Reverend Dr. Henderson S. Davis, Sr., Historiographer of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Ruth Vinita (Patterson) Davis, sculptor, painter, artist, and humanitarian, in Detroit, Michigan; and

WHEREAS, Davis Holman learned how to play piano and organ at an early age and sang in many of the churches her father pastored, in states ranging from Ohio and South Carolina to Indiana and Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, Davis Holman graduated from Waukegan High School in Waukegan, Illinois; and

WHEREAS, she then moved to California, where she completed her Bachelor's Degree from San Jose State University in 1976, while caring for her first child, Shirley Carter; and

WHEREAS, Davis Holman earned her Masters of Business Administration from the prestigious University of California, Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, Davis Holman gave birth to her second child, Kenetha Rogers, and continued her quest to be a provider and leader, studying arduously for the Certified Public Accountant exam, staying up long nights while her baby slept in the bed next to her, surrounded by accounting and business books; and

WHEREAS, Davis Holman passed her exam and achieved the designation of Certified Public Accountant, a position she maintained throughout her life and career; and

WHEREAS, Davis Holman packed her belongings and young children, and drove cross country to Nashville, where she changed into business attire in a North Nashville filling station restroom on her way to an interview for a teaching position at historic Fisk University; and

WHEREAS, Davis Holman accepted a position as a Professor of Accounting at Fisk University in the 1980s, where she lived in faculty housing at the corner of D.B. Todd Blvd and Morena Street, making friends with her fellow professors and building lasting ties to the Nashville community; and

WHEREAS, Professor Davis Holman, while working as a Fisk Professor full-time, also worked as an adjunct professor at Aquinas College, and an accountant at Caterpillar Corporation during the summer months, eventually saving enough money to purchase a home in the East Thompson neighborhood, Council District 13; and

WHEREAS, when her home burned in 2003, she maintained her resolve, and supervised its complete rebuilding, adding space for her youngest daughter to have her own room to support her matriculation through Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, Professor Davis Holman was known for her giving heart, whether it was volunteering to play the

piano in her child's classroom to entertain and inspire young people, or through her work with the churches she attended dutifully. When Professor Holman united with Payne Chapel AME Church in East Nashville, she served in the tri-vocational role of pianist, organist, and church accountant and bookkeeper, overseeing the largest period of growth and expansion in the church's history under the leadership of Pastor Dr. Kenneth Robinson; and

WHEREAS, Professor Davis Holman, after a devastating diagnosis of multiple sclerosis in the prime of her life, continued to move forward. Even as the disease claimed her ability to walk, confining her to a motorized wheelchair for the last two decades of her life, she still managed to maintain her position at Fisk University and the churches she served, through her retirement. From her power-scooter chair, she once recorded an entire soundtrack for the Amun Ra Theatre production of the gospel musical "Mahalia," based on the life and music of Mahalia Jackson; and

WHEREAS, Professor Davis Holman, who spent the majority of her life as an empowered single mother, managed to raise two phenomenal children, August "Shirley" Carter of Los Angeles, California, a successful visual artist and photographer with a Masters of Fine Arts from the University of California, Berkeley, and Kenetha Rogers Carr, Chief Operating Officer of The Infinity Fellowship Interfaith Gathering and Executive Director of the Infinity Center Youth Performing Arts Academy, a graduate of Fisk University with an additional Certificate in Accounting from Lipscomb University; and

WHEREAS, Professor Vinita "NaNa" Davis Holman is beloved of her children, grandchildren, siblings, extended family, friends, and former students who she pushed to the highest standards of excellence over the course of a wonderful career, and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council honors and remembers the life and generosity of Professor Vinita Davis Holman.

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 Professor Vinita Davis Holman.

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.