



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

File #: RS2021-1058, **Version:** 1

A resolution honoring the life of Dr. Frederick S. Humphries, former Tennessee State University President.

WHEREAS, Dr. Frederick S. Humphries passed away on June 24, 2021 at the age of 85, and is remembered as a stalwart of higher education and a staunch advocate for historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs); and

WHEREAS, Humphries grew up in the small town of Apalachicola, Florida where he attended the all-Black Wallace M. Quinn High School and was one of only nine graduates in the class of 1953; and

WHEREAS, after graduating high school, Humphries went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree magna cum laude in chemistry from Florida A&M University (FAMU) in 1957 and was also a distinguished military science graduate. It was reported that Frederick was the first Black officer to be commissioned into the Army Security Agency (Army Intelligence Branch); and

WHEREAS, after serving in the Army for two years, Frederick became a teaching assistant at the University of Pittsburgh and a graduate research fellow the following year, eventually becoming the first African American to earn a Ph.D. in physical chemistry from the university; and

WHEREAS, Frederick Humphries' academic achievements did not go unnoticed and led the Tennessee Board of Regents to name him as President of Tennessee State University (TSU) in 1974, a position he held until he was appointed to lead his alma mater (FAMU) in 1985; and

WHEREAS, during his time at TSU, Humphries' administration skills resulted in improved and expanded academic programs, upgraded faculty, increased enrollment and quality of students, and expanded scholarships and support activities; and

WHEREAS, notably, Humphries strongly advocated for the rights of TSU, a historically Black university, when he insisted on its predominance over the University of Tennessee at Nashville (UTN) during the landmark court case. This ultimately led to the merger of TSU and UTN, with TSU becoming the surviving institution. The merger was heralded as one of the fairest and most important desegregation decisions of the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, Humphries was President of FAMU for six years, gaining increased recognition on the state, national, and international levels, and was later named President Emeritus; and

WHEREAS, Humphries was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the American Association of Higher Education, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, and the American Association of Minority Research Universities; and

WHEREAS, Frederick is survived by three children, Frederick Jr., Robin, and Laurence, and eight grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council go on record as honoring the life of Dr. Frederick S. Humphries and recognizes his dedicated service to Nashville during his time as President of Tennessee State University.

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 Dr. Frederick S. Humphries.

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.