



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

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A resolution recognizing the retirement of Metro Nashville Public Library Director Kent Oliver.

WHEREAS, after a 51-year career in public libraries, Nashville Public Library Director Kent Oliver will retire on July 22, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Kent Oliver received his bachelor's degree from Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas and his master's degree in library science from Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas; and

WHEREAS, Oliver started his career as a reference librarian at the Topeka Public Library in Topeka, Kansas. He served as head of public services at the Daniel Boone Regional Library in Columbia, Missouri, library director at the Olathe Public Library in Olathe, Kansas, associate director for branch services for the Johnson County Library in Overland Park, Kansas, and library director at the Stark County District Library in Canton, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, Oliver joined Nashville Public Library in 2012 after the Nashville Public Library Board unanimously voted to approve his hiring; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, Nashville Public Library has expanded its community education initiatives in health, digital, citizenship, and adult literacy, and has grown its nationally recognized partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, the library's footprint has also grown under Oliver's leadership, with new locations in Bellevue and Southeast Nashville, and a new Donelson branch library set to open in 2024; and

WHEREAS, during Oliver's career, Nashville Public Library built and renovated several Metro Nashville Public Schools libraries, and its partnership with MNPS, called Limitless Libraries, gives Metro students access to over two million books and materials; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, the Library Journal named Nashville Public Library "Library of the Year" - the best public library in the United States and Canada - a coveted and highly prestigious award; and

WHEREAS, that same year, Nashville Public Library eliminated all overdue fines for greater community accessibility; and

WHEREAS, public libraries play a critical role in society as spaces where people can attain knowledge, serve as community gathering spaces, and serve as a defender of the public's First Amendment rights; and

WHEREAS, Kent Oliver dedicated his career to people and the freedom to read. He is a three-time president of the Freedom to Read Foundation and previously chaired the Intellectual Freedom Committee of the American Library Association. His writings on intellectual freedom and the First Amendment have appeared in numerous publications, including Forbes and The Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council recognizes Kent Oliver upon his retirement, and thanks him for his many years of dedicated service to the people of Nashville and Davidson County.

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

Section 1. That the Metropolitan County Council hereby goes on record as honoring Kent Oliver upon the occasion of his retirement as Director of Nashville Public Library.

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.