



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

File #: RS2022-1847, **Version:** 1

A resolution honoring the life of Dr. Paul T. Kwami.

WHEREAS, Dr. Paul T. Kwami passed away on September 10, 2022 at the age of 70; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kwami was the revered Musical Director of the award-winning Fisk Jubilee Singers and Mike Curb Jubilee Singers Endowed Chair; and

WHEREAS, Kwami was born in Ghana, West Africa in 1952 and was one of seven children who grew up surrounded by the musical influences of his father, a farmer, who was also a musician and taught him piano, violin, theory, and conducting; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kwami studied music at Ghana's National Academy of Music where he also taught until immigrating to the United States in 1983 as a student at Fisk University; and

WHEREAS, once at Fisk University, he promptly connected with the university organist, McCoy Ransom, who became his mentor, and went on to join the Fisk Jubilee Singers; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kwami graduated from Fisk in 1985 and continued his study of music at Western Michigan University, where he earned a Master of Music degree in 1987; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, Dr. Kwami returned to Nashville to serve as part-time director of the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Shortly thereafter, he was promoted to full-time faculty member in the music department and became the Musical Director of the ensemble; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kwami was the first African to direct the Fisk Jubilee Singers, and the first to hold the Curb-Beaman Chair position; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kwami went on to earn his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting from the American Conservatory of Music in 2009; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kwami remained the Director of the Fisk Jubilee Singers for the rest of his life; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership the ensemble won many accolades including a Grammy, a Dove Award, the National Medal of the Arts, and were inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kwami led the Fisk Jubilee Singers to performances at The Apollo, Carnegie Hall, the White House, and his homeland of Ghana as part of the country's 50th anniversary celebration of its independence; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kwami was known for his gentle voice and kind spirit, and the city of Nashville was very fortunate to serve as his home for so long; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council honors the life of Dr. Paul T. Kwami and recognizes his unwavering dedication and insight which he generously shared with Fisk University, the Fisk Jubilee Singers, and the city of Nashville.

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 and legacy of Dr. Paul T. Kwami.

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.