

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

25-184

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

March 5, 2024

To recognize and celebrate the legacy and history of African American children's literature in the District of Columbia.

WHEREAS, children's literature written by African Americans, including authors like Sterling Brown, May Miller Sullivan, Eloise Greenfield, Lucille Clifton, E. Ethelbert Miller, Jason Reynolds, Kwame Alexander, Joy Jones, Tricia Walker, and others who have lived or worked in Washington, DC, has been an essential vehicle for conveying Black history and culture since the 18th century;

WHEREAS, African American children's literature is a necessary component of children of the African diaspora seeing themselves and others with empathy, diversity, critical-thinking, cultural awareness, inspiration, role-models, community-building, improved mental health, and advanced academic performance;

WHEREAS, Black authors have had to struggle against various mainstream forces in America, including white supremacy, to ensure the authentic representation of African American history and culture through their books -- including self-publishing and self-distribution by African American bookstores like Pyramid Books, Drum & Spear Bookstore, Sanfoka, Busboys and Poets, Social Justice Books, and Mahogany;

WHEREAS, the success of African American authors of children's literature, the artists who illustrated their books, and the businesses and academic institutions that promoted their work, such as Carter G. Woodson's Associated Publishers, Howard University, the University of the District of Columbia, and the D.C. Public Library among other supporters and patrons, has contributed greatly to the socioeconomic advancement of generations of African Americans throughout the world, in the United States, and especially in Washington, D.C. -- the nation's capital;

WHEREAS, because of their creativity, advocacy, and sheer determination to ensure the accurate and positive historical and cultural portrayal of Blacks in America and around the world, African American authors of children's literature who lived and worked in Washington, D.C. made the District a vital contributor to the literary canon of this country through the New Negro Movement, the Black Arts Movement, and into this 21st Century; and

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

WHEREAS, on March 2, 2024, the first African American Children’s Literature Symposium and Exhibition supported by Humanities DC, being held on the campus of Trinity Washington University, presented by Esther Productions Inc, the Black Student Fund, and curated by Dr. Bernard Demczuk and others will demonstrate the longevity, essence and power of local and national authors and illustrators of African American children’s literature.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “African Americans and Children’s Literature: A Symposium and Exhibition Ceremonial Recognition Resolution of 2024”.

Sec. 2. The Council recognizes and celebrates the rich history, legacy, and future of Washington, D.C.’s African American children’s literary community, and declares March 2, 2024 as African American Children’s Literature Day in the District of Columbia.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.