



Councilmember Charles Allen

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To recognize and honor the career and achievements of Dr. Michael Witmore for his service as Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library and for his remarkable contributions to the cultural landscape of the District.

WHEREAS, Dr. Michael Witmore, with his visionary leadership, has served as the esteemed Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library for more than a decade, guiding the institution through a period of significant transformation and growth;

WHEREAS, under Dr. Witmore's stewardship, the Folger Shakespeare Library has become a cultural beacon, evolving into a vibrant hub for cultural programming in the region and showcasing the largest Shakespeare collection in the world;

WHEREAS, Dr. Witmore's unwavering commitment to making the Folger Shakespeare Library a cultural destination has been a driving force in elevating the humanities, reaching out to those beyond the academic realm, and engaging diverse communities with the wonders of Shakespeare's legacy;

WHEREAS, the strategic vision of Dr. Witmore led to the successful planning and execution of an ambitious \$80.5 million renovation project, which includes a 12,000-square-foot underground expansion and a new vault to display the entire collection of 82 Shakespeare First Folios, providing unprecedented access to these invaluable literary treasures;

WHEREAS, Dr. Witmore's leadership during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated his dedication to the institution's resilience, fostering innovation and adaptability to continue the Folger's important mission even amidst unprecedented circumstances;

WHEREAS, Dr. Witmore has shown a commitment to inclusivity, accessibility, and open engagement with the community that has been foundational to the Folger Shakespeare Library's transformation, ensuring that the institution remains a welcoming space for all to explore, learn, and appreciate the richness of Shakespearean heritage;

46 WHEREAS, Dr. Witmore has extended an abundant welcome to everyone, fostering an
47 inclusive environment through the implementation of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and
48 Accessibility (DEIA) initiatives at the Folger Shakespeare Library;
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50 WHEREAS, to commemorate the Folger Shakespeare Library's 50th anniversary, Dr.
51 Witmore spearheaded a remarkable year-long series of virtual programs titled “Critical Race
52 Conversations” with scholars, highlighting the importance of exploring critical race issues;
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54 WHEREAS, under Dr. Witmore's guidance, the Folger Shakespeare Library significantly
55 expanded its digital resources and experiences for Shakespeare lovers worldwide, providing free
56 access to The Folger Shakespeare text online, producing the popular “Shakespeare Unlimited”
57 podcast, and launching new resources like Early Modern Manuscripts Online and Early Modern
58 English Drama websites;
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60 WHEREAS, Dr. Witmore's dedication to research is evident in the increase of research
61 fellowships and residencies for artists, fostering a vibrant and collaborative intellectual
62 community;
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64 WHEREAS, Dr. Witmore's commitment to education is demonstrated by the Folger
65 Shakespeare Library's role as a primary provider of professional development related to
66 Shakespeare for the District of Columbia Public Schools and the development of innovative online
67 communities and resources for teachers;
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69 WHEREAS, under Dr. Witmore's leadership, the Folger Shakespeare Library has
70 significantly contributed to the preservation and dissemination of Shakespearean heritage, as
71 evidenced by UNESCO's recognition of 90 documents related to Shakespeare from the Folger
72 Shakespeare Library’s collection in its Memory of the World Register;
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74 WHEREAS, Dr. Witmore's dedication to advancing public programming, education, and
75 collections-based research has elevated the Folger Shakespeare Library's impact and relevance,
76 solidifying its position as a leading center for scholarly pursuits and cultural exploration; and
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78 WHEREAS, Dr. Witmore will be stepping down as the Director of the Shakespeare Library
79 this summer, culminating 13 years of remarkable and inspirational leadership.
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81 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that this
82 resolution may be cited as the “Dr. Michael Witmore Recognition Resolution of 2024”.
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84 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes and honors the career and
85 achievements of Dr. Michael Witmore for his service as Director of the Folger Shakespeare
86 Library and for his remarkable contributions to the cultural landscape of the District.
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88 Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.