

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

25-298

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

December 3, 2024

To recognize and honor Dr. Janelle Goetcheus for her work to advance health equity and accessible healthcare.

WHEREAS, Dr. Janelle Goetcheus dedicated her life to the fight for health equity and accessible healthcare, living her entire life as a champion for individuals experiencing homelessness and underserved populations;

WHEREAS, Dr. Goetcheus was so moved by the deep need for accessible care that she witnessed during a family trip to D.C. in the 1970s that she dropped everything to lay down roots and build a community of like-minded individuals to serve the District's unhoused;

WHEREAS, Dr. Goetcheus founded Columbia Road Health Services, a medical clinic serving persons of low income and also helped start health centers at Community of Hope, Mary's Center, and S.O.M.E. (So Others Might Eat);

WHEREAS, recognizing the dire need for a dignified space for persons experiencing homelessness to stay and recuperate from their medical needs, Dr. Goetcheus, with fellow members of the Church of the Saviour community, envisioned Christ House, the first live-in medical respite facility in the nation, which has provided care for over 10,000 patient admissions since 1985;

WHEREAS, Dr. Goetcheus, together with Dr. Jesse Barber, founded the Health Care for the Homeless Project in a small room in a local shelter in 1985 to provide primary health care services to individuals and families that resided in local emergency shelters or on the streets of the District of Columbia;

WHEREAS, Dr. Goetcheus helped to grow the impact of HCHP beyond those experiencing homelessness, as the organization officially changed its name to Unity Healthcare in 1997 and care expanded to all District residents, regardless of ability to pay;

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WHEREAS, Dr. Goetcheus earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Ball State University in 1961 and her Doctor of Medicine degree from Indiana University School of Medicine in 1965;

WHEREAS, Dr. Goetcheus positively impacted the health of hundreds of thousands of people over the years both in clinic practice and as an essential advocate regularly testifying before legislative committees and sharing testimonies of her work with diverse groups;

WHEREAS, Dr. Goetcheus, even after she retired from administrative work, continued to see patients until she was physically unable because she felt it was the best way for her to continue to contribute to this mission she loved so much;

WHEREAS, Dr. Goetcheus' numerous awards and honors include Physician of the Year given by the American Academy of Family Physicians (1991), induction into the D.C. Women's Hall of Fame (1989), as well as honorary degrees from Trinity Washington University (1990) and Ball State University (1995). In addition, Dr. Goetcheus received the Presidential Medal for Distinguished Service from The Catholic University of America (1987), and National Health Care for the Homeless' Philip W. Brickner National Leadership Award (2017); and

WHEREAS, Dr. Goetcheus cherished her family and community deeply, and her legacy will continue to live on through the thousands of lives she touched with her gentle spirit, compassion, and comprehensive care.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Dr. Janelle Goetcheus Ceremonial Recognition Resolution of 2024".

Sec. 2. The Council honors the work of Dr. Janelle Goetcheus as an advocate for health equity.

Sec. 3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.