

Vincent C. Gray
Councilmember Vincent C. Gray

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To recognize the life and contributions of Evelyn Sommers on the occasion of her passing.

WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers served as the executive director of the District of Columbia Nurses Association (DCNA) from 1980 to 2002;

WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers mentored and inspired the careers of a cadre of nurses and other leaders in health care and social activism in the District of Columbia and around the United States;

WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers guided the nurses leadership in generating significant progress for the nursing profession and quality patient care locally through DCNA and nationally through their elected offices at the American Nurses Association;

WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers' background in journalism and political science, strategic insight, outreach to experts in various fields, understanding of human and financial resources, and determination to organize, educate, mobilize and activate led to DCNA collective bargaining victories in representation, negotiations, and arbitrations resulting in dramatic economic gains for nurses and improved patient care for consumers;

WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers' tenure as executive director saw a 10-fold increase in the number of nurses DCNA represented in the District for collective bargaining, including nurses at D.C. General Hospital, the V.A. Medical Center, the D.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Howard University Hospital, the Washington Hospital Center, Capitol Hill Hospital, Children's National Medical Center, Greater Southeast Community Hospital, and Columbia Hospital for Women;

34 WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers guided DCNA in developing a strong voice in the
35 District's legislative arena and supporting legislative initiatives such as the Patient's Bill of
36 Rights and a Family and Medical Leave Act that is more liberal than federal legislation;
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38 WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers was an effective leader in the fight for pay equity for D.C.
39 employees and for the healthcare safety net for D.C. residents;
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41 WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers fostered passage in the District of a comprehensive and
42 progressive Nurse Practice Act, one of the first in the country that ensured the right of nurses to
43 practice to the full extent of their education and scope of their profession;
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45 WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers made sure that Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in
46 the District won prescriptive authority, admitting privileges, and the right to practice to their full
47 professional scope without supervision by non-nurses or discrimination by other providers;
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49 WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers led DCNA's PAC to becoming a major political force and
50 analyzed nurse voters in each ward, so that DCNA members could prove decisive voters;
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52 WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers, after her retirement from DCNA and with her husband
53 John Sommers, opened and supported a school in Kenya which has graduated hundreds of
54 students who have since attended college and/or become gainfully employed; and
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56 WHEREAS, Evelyn Sommers, after her retirement from DCNA, took on the task of
57 becoming President of the Board of Directors of the D.C. chapter of the YWCA, which at the
58 time was facing a number of financial changes; and, along with then-Executive Director Tamara
59 Smith, she and the volunteers and staff worked together to develop and implement an action plan
60 that ensured considerable expansion of the YWCA, which is today a vital DC community
61 resource to women in need throughout the city.
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63 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
64 resolution may be cited as the "Evelyn Sommers Recognition Resolution of 2017".
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66 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia honors the contributions and legacy of
67 Evelyn Sommers.
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69 Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in
70 the District of Columbia Register.