

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

22-407

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

October 2, 2018

To celebrate the trailblazing spirit, career, and legacy of Alice Allison Dunnigan, who, despite endemic racism, institutional segregation, and palpable sexism, emerged as the pioneer for the National Black Press and the first African American to gain press accreditation to the White House.

WHEREAS, in Alice Allison Dunnigan's indelible climb from a red clay hill in Kentucky to Capitol Hill in Washington D.C., she asks that we judge her not by what she achieved, but by the depths from what she rose;

WHEREAS, Alice Allison Dunnigan was born April 27, 1906 in rural Russellville Kentucky, her father a tobacco sharecropper, her mother a laundress;

WHEREAS, Alice Allison Dunnigan attended school one day a week, learning to read in between her chores, before the first grade;

WHEREAS, at the age of 13 years, Alice Allison Dunnigan provided small headlines to the local Owenboro Enterprise newspaper, beginning her love of storytelling;

WHEREAS, against her parents will, and undeterred by the limited state expenditures afforded for black students, Alice Allison Dunnigan enrolled in Western Kentucky Industrial College, and continued her pursuit to write, publishing newspaper articles in Hopkinsville, Paducah, and Louisville;

WHEREAS, at 18 years of age, Alice Allison Dunnigan became a young teacher in the segregated school system of Todd County, where she supplemented her students' curriculum with historical fact-sheets brimming with the contributions of black southern ancestry;

WHEREAS, some 41 years later, these fact-sheets would be memorialized as the *Fascinating Story of Black Kentuckians: Their Heritage and Tradition*;

WHEREAS, during World War II, Alice Allison Dunnigan migrated north in response to a call for federal government employees;

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WHEREAS, while working as a federal typist, Alice Allison Dunnigan took night classes at Howard University and freelanced for the Associated Negro Press (“ANP”) news service;

WHEREAS, Alice Allison Dunnigan lived in a one-room basement in Ward 5’s Brookland neighborhood, where she shoveled coal for the building’s furnace in exchange for a reduction in rent;

WHEREAS, after being repeatedly denied press credentials to cover the Senate and Congress, Alice Allison Dunnigan eventually received clearance in 1947, becoming the first African American woman with Hill accreditation and earning her the title of ANP bureau chief;

WHEREAS, in 1948, Alice Allison Dunnigan joined the press corps of President Harry S. Truman’s Western Campaign;

WHEREAS, Alice Allison Dunnigan’s race and gender always preceded her; in 1953 she was banned from covering an Eisenhower speech at a whites-only theater and while covering the funeral of Ohio Senator Robert Taft was forced to sit with the servants;

WHEREAS, Alice Allison Dunnigan lamented these indignities but never retreated, stating “[r]ace and sex were twin strikes against me. I’m not sure which was the hardest to break down.”;

WHEREAS, Alice Allison Dunnigan was the first African American woman to be elected to the Women’s National Press Club, affording her rare travel opportunities to Israel, Haiti, Mexico and various countries in South America and Africa;

WHEREAS, Alice Allison Dunnigan’s commitment to the human narrative drove her beyond journalism and into political activism: President Kennedy named her Education Consultant for the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee and she toured the U.S. with Lady Bird Johnson assessing the progress of American education and later became the Information Specialist for the Department of Labor;

WHEREAS, Alice Allison Dunnigan reported on politics for 112 black newspapers and won over 50 journalism awards, including the coveted Capital Press Club Newsman’s Trophy and induction into the Journalism Hall of Fame at the University of Kentucky;

WHEREAS, Alice Allison Dunnigan penned an autobiography, *Alone Atop the Hill: The Autobiography of Alice Dunnigan, Pioneer of the National Black Press*, saluting members of the black press who covered the honest struggle for civil rights; she wrote “without black writers, the world would perhaps never have known the chicanery, shenanigans and buffoonery employed by

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those in high places to keep the black man in his proverbial place by relegating him to second-class citizenship;" and

WHEREAS, in 1983 Alice Allison Dunnigan passed away befittingly in Washington D.C., a city she captured in words and in truth.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Celebration of Alice Allison Dunnigan Recognition Resolution of 2018".

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia honors the bold life and legacy of Alice Allison Dunnigan.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.