

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

23-156

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

September 17, 2019

To recognize Zahir Muhammad, the 2019 winner and defending champion of the District of Columbia Scholastic Cup Chess Tournament.

WHEREAS, Zahir Muhammad is a Ward 7 resident and a senior at DeMatha Catholic High School where he takes honors classes, studies both Mandarin Chinese and Spanish, and recently returned from playing chess and completing a language study in Beijing, China;

WHEREAS, Zahir Muhammad is the highest-ranked scholastic chess player in Washington, D.C., and a nationally ranked chess player who has been playing since the age of 3;

WHEREAS, Zahir Muhammad was first taught to play chess by his father and went on to be trained by many chess instructors, including Grand Master Julio Becerra, International Master Oladapo Adu, National Master Gregory Achonolu, National Master Mark Berniacki, National Master David Bennett, Quito Swan and Robin Ramson;

WHEREAS, Zahir Muhammad was a top-10 finisher at the K-12 National Championships in 2017 and the 2018 Mid Atlantic Scholastic Chess Champion, and the back to back Washington, D.C. City Champion;

WHEREAS, Zahir Muhammad, now a Class A player, defended his title to become the 2019 winner of the District of Columbia Scholastic Cup Chess Tournament, again qualifying for the annual Denker High School Tournament of Champions;

WHEREAS, Zahir Muhammad was invited to the National Castle Chess Camp in Atlanta, Georgia, where he won the Castle Chess Grand Prix for the “Blue - 1800 Level Group” and defeated both Grand Master Julio Becerra based on time-out, and National Master Mark Berniacki;

WHEREAS, Zahir Muhammad taught students in China how to play chess in Chinese and played a Chinese Chess club, winning 7 out of 8 training games;

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WHEREAS, Zahir Muhammad is active in other activities such as AAU basketball, track and field, the Marion Barry Youth Leadership Institute and the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington;

WHEREAS, Zahir Muhammad serves as the coach for the Howard University Chess Team;

WHEREAS, Zahir Muhammad established an organization, Full Circle Chess, to bring chess to the underserved communities and change the perception of chess to help it become a more inclusive activity; and

WHEREAS, Zahir Muhammad seeks to be an example to help bring other black and brown children closer to the game of chess and the learning experience that chess affords.

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Zahir Muhammad Recognition Resolution of 2019”.

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes and congratulates Zahir Muhammad for becoming a consecutive winner of the District of Columbia Scholastic Cup Chess Tournament and a repeat qualifier for the Denker High School Tournament of Champions, and for his exceptional achievements as a chess player, student and citizen.

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