

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

23-161

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

September 17, 2019

To recognize Tom Lewis on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis was born in 1939 in Chadbourn, North Carolina as the 6th of 15 children of the late Martha and Gaston Lewis and raised in poverty in Elizabethtown, North Carolina;

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis dropped out of high school in 9th grade and began working as a migrant farmhand on the Eastern Seaboard;

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis was drafted in 1961 to serve in the U.S. Army where he was able to earn his General Education Diploma;

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis, upon his discharge from the U.S. Army in 1963, worked odd jobs in New York City while providing support to his family back home;

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis joined the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department in 1965 and served as a police officer for more than 20 years, witnessing the riots following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and seeing the District repeatedly succumb to crime and violence;

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis went from classroom to classroom teaching students how to become upstanding citizens as part of the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department's Officer Friendly program, seeing firsthand the needs of the city's youth whose mothers were addicts and fathers were absent or incarcerated;

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis earned his bachelor's degree in administration of justice from American University in 1975 after six years of working days, attending school at night, and raising 3 children with his wife;

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis became a licensed social worker and an ordained Baptist minister in 1984;

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis in 1990, a few years after his retirement from the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, renovated a former crack house on what was once deemed "the worst street in America" and transformed it into The Fishing School;

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis was inspired to name the organization The Fishing School by the adage that states "If you give a man a fish, you will feed him for a day; teach him how to fish, and he will feed himself for a lifetime";

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis recognized that education can unlock the door to knowledge and opportunity and break the cycle of poverty, and started the work of The Fishing School by providing after-school tutoring and life skills training for 5 students from the Wylie Street, Northeast community;

WHEREAS, The Fishing School has served nearly 7,000 students and families in marginalized communities since its humble beginnings in 1990, and today continues both Mr. Lewis' legacy and its mission to offer every child a brighter future;

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis remained actively involved in The Fishing School as a member of its Board of Directors until his September 22, 2017 retirement from the Board; and

WHEREAS, Tom Lewis celebrates his 80th birthday on August 7, 2019 and will be honored Saturday, September 28, 2019 at The Fishing School's Third Annual Celebration of Service, which will include the Barbeque, Boots, and Blue Jeans 80th Birthday Bash and the 10th Anniversary of the *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* Build.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Tom Lewis 80th Birthday Recognition Resolution of 2019".

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia celebrates Tom Lewis on his 80th birthday and recognizes his years as a public servant, his founding of The Fishing School and his service on The Fishing School's Board of Directors.

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

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