

1 *Brianne K. Nadeau*

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3 Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau

Trayon White

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5 Councilmember Trayon White, Sr.

6 *Mary Cheh*

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8 Councilmember Mary Cheh

Christina Henderson

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10 Councilmember Christina Henderson

11 *Kenyan R. McDuffie*

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13 Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie

Robert C. White, Jr.

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15 Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.

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22 A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

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26 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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30 To acknowledge and honor the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center Annual Blacks in
31 Wax Production for its innovative and empowering African American history and
32 education program for youth and yearly city-wide theatrical performance.

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35 WHEREAS, in 2006, during Black History Month, Cora Masters Barry, CEO of
36 the Recreation Wish List Committee, conceived of the Blacks in Wax Program as a way
37 for the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center (SETLC) to provide a non-traditional
38 approach to educating youth about African American culture and history to help them
39 enjoy and retain the information.

40 WHEREAS, the Blacks in Wax Program originally started as an alternative way
41 to educate SETLC scholars about African American history and African American icons.
42 The cultural, educational, and artistic impact of the Blacks in Wax Program continues to
43 ensure that the diverse District of Columbia residents and guests who attend the annual
44 theatrical performance are informed, engaged, and amazed.

45 WHEREAS, the inaugural Blacks in Wax Production was a simple play created
46 and performed by SETLC scholars in the Dr. Julianne Malveaux Reading Room
47 (Library) that allowed children to act out various African American characters and
48 events. Scholars modeled their approach after the National Blacks in Wax Museum in
49 Baltimore. The goal of Cora Masters Barry’s program was accomplished. SETLC
50 scholars had fun, learned from their research, and embraced the process.

51 WHEREAS, Blacks in Wax gives the SETLC tennis scholars the ability to gain
52 more confidence in themselves and pride in their heritage which results in overall greater
53 self-esteem. The Blacks in Wax Program experience helps SETLC scholars to relate to
54 positive role models and inspires SETLC scholars to become future leaders.

55 WHEREAS, Blacks in Wax theatrical performance comprise 50 to 70 SETLC
56 scholars, ages 4 to 17, transform from a “wax replica” to a live portrayal of influential
57 figures from American History including artists, entertainers, writers, athletes, and
58 political/inspirational leaders. As a member of the Blacks in Wax cast, SETLC scholars
59 research, write, study characterization, coach and support each other while learning and
60 growing more confident as young citizens.

61 WHEREAS, SETLC’s Annual Blacks in Wax theatrical performance is the
62 culmination of months of preparation. The process begins with the tennis scholars

63 researching iconic African American citizens and events. Scholars suggest facts to be
64 included in the script and engage in coaching sessions. SETLC scholars practice together
65 and critique each other until they can present flawless portrayals in front of their peers
66 and larger audiences.

67 WHEREAS, while SETLC scholars learn about the historic figures and historical
68 events, they also learn about themselves, and discover they too, can do anything and be
69 anything they work hard to become. As each scholar goes through the process, they are
70 educated, empowered, and transformed into the icons they have studied.

71 WHEREAS, through the Blacks in Wax Program, SETLC scholars build self-
72 esteem, self-confidence, and an amazing sense of accomplishment which is confirmed by
73 the overwhelming response to their performances.

74 WHEREAS, the SETLC scholars strive toward excellence and their extensive
75 hours of hard work and dedication always pays off. The result is developing an
76 outstanding work ethic, immense memorization techniques and a greater understanding
77 of sacrifice.

78 WHEREAS, from humble beginnings in the SETLC library to sold-out
79 performances at the John F. Kennedy for Performing Arts Center, Blacks in Wax
80 continues to excite, teach, and unite through the power of music, dance, and drama.

81 WHEREAS, SETLC scholars have delivered their Blacks in Wax theatrical
82 performances at several venues throughout the District of Columbia, among them, The
83 White House, Lincoln Theater, Howard Theater, John F. Kennedy Center for the
84 Performing Arts, TheArc, and, the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

85 WHEREAS, SETLC scholars have delivered their Blacks in Wax theatrical
86 performances in front of historical icons, among them, Cicely Tyson, Jessie Jackson,
87 Hilary Rodham Clinton, Mayor Marion Barry, Mayor Vincent Gray, and Mayor Muriel
88 Bowser.

89 RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA that this
90 resolution may be cited as the “Southeast Tennis and Learning Center Blacks in Wax
91 Production Recognition Resolution of 2021”.

92 Sec. 2. The Council and District of Columbia acknowledge and honor the
93 Southeast Tennis and Learning Center Annual Blacks in Wax Production for its
94 innovative and empowering African American history and education program for youth
95 and yearly city-wide theatrical performance.

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