

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

24-148

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

March 1, 2022

To recognize Marion Barry, Jr., as one of the most impactful mayors in United States history, on the occasion of his posthumous 86th birthday, and to declare March 6th, 2022, “Marion Barry Day” in the District of Columbia.

WHEREAS, Marion Barry’s activism was rooted in experiences as a young Black child attending elementary, middle, and high school in the Deep South when schools and public facilities were legally segregated;

WHEREAS, while pursuing his master’s degree in organic chemistry he made “good trouble” and was arrested multiple times for participating in sit-ins to desegregate lunch counters in Nashville;

WHEREAS, his deep commitment to the civil rights movement led him to leave the stability of a doctoral program at the University of Kansas and move to the District of Columbia to serve as the first chairman of the Student Nonviolence Coordinating Committee (SNCC), an organization led by the likes of Congressman John Lewis and dedicated to nonviolent direct action protests against segregation and all forms of racial discrimination;

WHEREAS, Marion Barry, motivated by his experiences of inequality, was unanimously elected president and at-large member of the District of Columbia Board of Education, and served from 1971 to 1974 where he advocated for more funding for education, raised teachers’ salaries, and hired Ms. Barbara Sizemore as superintendent, the first Black woman to head a major school system in the nation;

WHEREAS, in 1974, he was elected as an At-Large Member to the first Council of the District of Columbia, giving him an early role in District home rule and self-governance, something for which he advocated as a member of SNCC;

WHEREAS, in 1978, Marion Barry ran for and was elected Mayor of the District of Columbia on promises to bring efficiency, competence, compassion, and equitable representation to government;

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

WHEREAS, he believed the District should uplift all marginalized communities, and promoted bilingual school programs and legislation that created the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs; participated in the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in 1979; hired the first openly gay person in a mayoral cabinet; and was a proponent of Gay Pride Day, which eventually evolved into Capital Pride;

WHEREAS, at a time when women were disproportionately excluded from leadership positions, Marion Barry believed that real progress required women at the table and nominated and appointed many women to positions of power, including Madeline Petty, his Director of Housing and Community Development, the first woman to hold that position, and now District of Columbia Councilmember Anita Bonds to his personal staff;

WHEREAS, Marion Barry increased the proportion of government contracts awarded to Black owned businesses from 5 percent, at a time when the population was 70 percent Black, to 40 percent, and leveraged the District's contracting power to compel private corporations to appoint women and minorities to positions of leadership creating a larger Black middle class in the District;

WHEREAS, Marion Barry formalized these efforts with the first iteration of the Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) program allowing a share of city business to go to minority-owned enterprises;

WHEREAS, Marion Barry established a groundbreaking program for guaranteed summer employment for young people through Pride Inc., affectionately known as the Stay in School Program, and now known as the Mayor Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP);

WHEREAS, SYEP gave many residents their first job and in many cases their first experience of socioeconomic empowerment, and almost 55 years after the creation of this program, scores of District residents still say, "Marion Barry gave me my first job";

WHEREAS, SYEP was a visionary program that exposed young people in the District to professional opportunities at a time when many families did not have access to internships for their children, and it continues to operate and support District students by providing a source of income, an opportunity to explore future careers, and the experience necessary to participate in a competitive workforce;

WHEREAS, in 1980, Marion Barry established a Protocol of Exchange with the Mayor of Dakar, Senegal making the two capitals "sister cities", which facilitated an exchange of best practice information, fostered friendship, promoted economic trade and investment, and provided educational opportunities to youth;

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

WHEREAS, the “sister cities” program was a catalyst for international relationships with the District and continues to this day;

WHEREAS, Marion Barry was a skilled negotiator who brought large developers into the District to make first-time investments in underserved communities providing an unprecedented number of jobs and businesses to help those in the District who were historically denied economic empowerment;

WHEREAS, Marion Barry embraced Go-Go music, now the Official Music of the District, and under his leadership provided free Go-Go concerts to young people through the Department of Parks and Recreation, and often invited Go-Go bands to perform in public forums;

WHEREAS, Marion Barry’s public service to the District was expansive: He served as At-Large Councilmember from 1974-1979; Mayor from 1979-1991; Ward 8 Councilmember from 1993 to 1995; Mayor from 1995-1999, and again Ward 8 Councilmember from 2005 to 2014;

WHEREAS, his life experiences and love for the Black community inspired Black residents in an unprecedented way; and

WHEREAS, Marion Barry’s mayoral legacy is one of hope, dignity, and a strengthened Black middle class, all of which impacted all Washingtonians by fearlessly creating a revolutionary framework to support the diverse unseen, unsupported, and oppressed communities in the District.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution be cited as the “Marion Barry Day Declaration Resolution of 2022”.

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes Marion Barry, Jr., for almost 5 decades of work and dedicated service to the District of Columbia as a beloved Mayor and Councilmember.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.