

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

24-184

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

May 3, 2022

To posthumously recognize and honor the life of Chester Bruce Johnson, award-winning broadcast journalist in the District of Columbia, decorated civic leader, and Ward 4 Resident, who passed away on April 3, 2022.

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson was born on June 5, 1950 in Louisville, Kentucky;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson was a graduate and noted alumnus of Northern Kentucky University with a degree in Political Science;

WHEREAS, he also held a Master's Degree in Public Affairs from the University of Cincinnati;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson was initiated into the University of Louisville Alpha Omicron Chapter of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity in 1970, and in 2020 attained the honor of becoming a Life Member after celebrating 50 years in the fraternity;

WHEREAS, in 2018 Bruce Johnson was awarded an honorary doctorate of letters by his alma mater, Northern Kentucky University;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson began his journalism career at WCPO-TV in Cincinnati, Ohio as one of the city's first Black news anchors;

WHEREAS, in 1976, Bruce Johnson joined WUSA 9 TV, the CBS affiliate in Washington, D.C. and became a nightly news fixture for thousands of residents in the Washington region;

WHEREAS, on December 31, 2020 Bruce Johnson retired from WUSA 9 after 44 years of excellence in reporting;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson was recognized as an expert on District government and politics for his in-depth, trustworthy coverage of Mayoral and D.C. Council news and earned a reputation for some of the nation's finest reporting on inner-city communities;

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WHEREAS, throughout his career he also covered numerous internationally and nationally significant events including the election of Pope Francis in Rome (2013), the deadly 2010 earthquake in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, and the Hanafi Siege in Washington, D.C. (1977);

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson covered international stories in Moscow, Paris, Stockholm, Budapest, Bangkok, Tokyo, and Dakar in his role as reporter and anchor for the acclaimed "Capitals of the World" documentary series;

WHEREAS, in 1992, while on assignment for a story on the Marion Barry Summer Youth Program, Bruce Johnson suffered a massive heart attack, and documented his experience on video which resulted in a nationally acclaimed series on cardiovascular disease;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson used his recovery from his heart attack to promote heart health and partnered with the Association of Black Cardiologists to produce and moderate the documentary "Before You Eat the Church Food, Watch This Video";

WHEREAS, after retiring from WUSA 9 in 2020, he founded The Bruce Johnson Group, which specialized in media, communications, writing, lecturing, and public speaking;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson authored three books: Heart to Heart, about his personal journey, and the journey of 10 others, recovering from heart attacks (2009); All or Nothing: The Victor Page Story, detailing the rise of native-Washingtonian basketball prodigy whose career was sabotaged by a violent past (2016); and Surviving Deep Waters: A Legendary Reporter's Story of Overcoming Poverty, Race, Violence, and His Mother's Deepest Secret, Johnson's personal memoir (2022);

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson was a member of the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. and the National Association of Black Journalists;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson was inducted into the Society of Professional Journalists Hall of Fame, the Washington, D.C. Hall of Fame, the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame at the University of Kentucky, and the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) Silver Circle;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson won numerous awards, including 22 Emmys for his reporting and special assignments, the "Ted Yates Award," Washington broadcast journalism's highest honor, the Associated Press first place honors, the NATAS Board of Governors Award, and the Capitol Press Club twice awarded him with their highest award;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson was a local and national heart health advocate, and, in 2011, he received a Doctor's National Award from the Association of Black Cardiologists, and MendedHearts.org awarded him a life membership for his work in 2018;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson also became an active participant, fundraiser, and spokesperson for the Lymphoma Research Foundation after being diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 2018;

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WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson served on the Board of Trustees for Saint John’s Catholic High School and on the Board for "Super Leaders" a teen counseling program that operates in several high schools and is headed by former Washington Football Team player Brigg Owens;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson received hundreds of civic awards from District organizations for his civic and charitable work, from the District’s Mayors and two previous Resolutions in his honor from the Council of the District of Columbia;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson was a longtime resident of Ward 4 and a devout parishioner at St. Augustine Catholic Church in Ward 1;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson passed away on April 3, 2022 surrounded by family;

WHEREAS, Bruce Johnson is survived by his wife of 20 years, Lori Smith-Johnson, their 3 shared children, and 5 grandchildren.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Bruce Johnson Posthumous Memorial Recognition Resolution of 2022.”

Sec. 2 The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes and honors the life and legacy of Bruce Johnson for his valuable contributions to the District of Columbia during his 44-year career as a WUSA Channel 9 reporter, his leadership as a heart-health and cancer patient advocate, and his good example as a civic and charitable leader in the Washington region.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.