

Resolution of the Durham Board of Education

Honoring the Life and Legacy of Dr. E. Lavonia Allison

WHEREAS, Dr. E. Lavonia Ingram Allison, a fearless advocate for civil rights, education, and community empowerment, dedicated her life to ensuring justice and equality for all, with an unwavering concern for marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, born and raised in Durham's historic Hayti community, Salutatorian of her class, she excelled academically at the Historic Hillside High School before earning her Bachelor of Science in Physical Education from Hampton University and her Master of Arts in Health and Physical Education and Doctorate in Higher Education Administration from New York University, using her wisdom to uplift future generations; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Allison was a tireless champion for Durham Public Schools, relentlessly advocating for educational equity and the fair treatment of all students; and

WHEREAS, she was a staunch supporter of the performing arts at Hillside High School, advocating for the construction of a larger band suite to properly accommodate the size and legacy of the renowned Hillside Band, ensuring students had the space and resources necessary to uphold its tradition of excellence; and

WHEREAS, as a dedicated educator for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), she mentored and empowered countless students, fostering academic excellence and leadership among young African Americans; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Allison's leadership as Chair of the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People (DCABP) for 14 years strengthened African American political representation, ensuring that elected officials were accountable to the community; and

WHEREAS, she was passionate about educating high school students on entrepreneurship, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to start their own businesses, and ensuring they understood the legacy of Durham's Black Wall Street so they could carry it forward for future generations; and

WHEREAS, she was a staunch defender of voting rights, leading voter registration efforts, mentoring political leaders, and playing a key role in establishing a voting precinct at North Carolina Central University to ensure student access to the ballot; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Allison was a bold and fearless voice in shaping public policy, serving as First Vice Chair of the Durham County Democratic Party and advising local and state leaders on issues of racial equity and justice; and

WHEREAS, her contributions were recognized and celebrated by those who praised her lifelong dedication to justice and equality; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Allison remained a mentor, advocate, and force for change, attending, regularly, Durham School Board meetings, advising younger activists, and ensuring that the fight for justice continued beyond her own lifetime; and

WHEREAS, on January 7, 2025, at the age of 94, Dr. Allison's passing was a profound loss for the City of Durham and the nation. Her enduring legacy of courage, service, and advocacy remains a guiding force, inspiring future generations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we honor the extraordinary life and legacy of Dr. E. Lavonia Allison, recognizing her unwavering commitment to education, civil rights, and social justice, and express our deepest gratitude for her immeasurable contributions to Durham and beyond.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be presented as a lasting testament to her impact, ensuring that her work, wisdom, and vision remain an enduring inspiration for future Durham Public Schools scholars and leaders.

Adopted this day, Thursday, February 06, 2025

Millicent Rogers, Chair

Jessica Carda Auten, Vice Chair

Natalie Beyer

Emily Chavez

Joy Harrell-Goff

Wendell Tabb

Bettina Umstead