

Resolution of Recognition & Appreciation Mr. Harry Winters Thomas

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Caddo Parish Commission to give appropriate acknowledgment and recognition to individuals that have rendered invaluable service to the citizens of Caddo Parish; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harry Winters Thomas is an iconic personality in local journalism and has contributed indelibly through his 40 year career of uncovering information, documenting & interpreting significant events and situations, and advocating for the underrepresented voices to be heard as the story of Caddo Parish is told. Thomas' talent and dedication saw him break barriers to become one of the first Black journalists to be employed in mainstream local media outlet in Northwest Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Harry Thomas is a native of Shreveport, La., having been born March 5th, 1954. Thomas attended and graduated from Caddo Parish public schools and continued his studies at Southern University in Baton Rouge before returning to Shreveport to begin his career in journalism; and

WHEREAS, Thomas began his career during the tumultuous times of the 1970's as a reporter at the Shreveport Sun where his firsthand knowledge of the challenges facing the Black community at the time helped him to ask the hard questions that others weren't willing to and carve out a reputation as someone who could get to the heart of a story. His factual, trustworthy reporting and ability to express complicated issues in direct terms helped to inform and educate many in the Black Community to issues they may not have otherwise been aware of and further established the Shreveport Sun as a vital source for news; and

WHEREAS, Thomas' contributions to the Shreveport Sun were so significant that he became one of the first Black journalists to work for a mainstream local media outlet when he was hired by the Shreveport Journal Newspaper where he would report for many years and where he contributed articles and perspectives that remain relevant today, for example, his 1992 article on local prison planning was one of the first to point out the need to reduce the demand for prison space by seeking diversion programs and reducing the rate that minorities were being sentenced to prison; and

WHEREAS, Thomas continued to tell the story of our community, but from 1998 to 2014 he shifted his focus to telling the story to visitors through his work with and advocacy for the African American Multicultural Tourism Commission, who were one of the first organizations to receive NGO Funding from the Caddo Parish Commission; and

WHEREAS, Thomas never has let his distinguished work get in the way of love for and commitment to his God and his family. Thomas serves as a Deacon at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Shreveport and he and his beloved wife, Betty, have one son, Omar, who resides in South Louisiana; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby declare and proclaim July 25th, 2021 to be:

'MR. HARRY WINTERS THOMAS DAY'

in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, in recognition and admiration of his notable contributions to Caddo Parish through his accomplishments and barrier breaking career in journalism and his service advocating to tell the story, especially from the underrepresented voices, of Caddo Parish.

ATTEST:

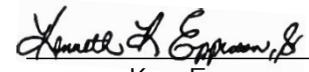


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District 12