

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 1999
RATIFIED BILL

RESOLUTION 11
HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1251

A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF KENNETH R. WILLIAMS, ONE OF WINSTON-SALEM'S MOST PROMINENT CITIZENS.

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams was born on August 16, 1912, in Norfolk, Virginia, to Kenneth R. Williams and Vandelia Perry Williams; and

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams grew up in Winston-Salem, attended the public schools, and graduated from Columbian Heights High School in 1928; and

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams earned a bachelors degree in history from Morehouse College and both a masters and doctorate degree from Boston University; and

Whereas, in 1936, Kenneth R. Williams joined the faculty of Winston-Salem Teachers College, now Winston-Salem State University, where he taught history until 1937; and

Whereas, from 1937 to 1939, Kenneth R. Williams taught at the Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia, North Carolina; and

Whereas, in 1938, Kenneth R. Williams married Edythe Williams and to this union three sons, Kenneth, Ronald, and Norman, were born; and

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams served his country during World War II as a Chaplain in the United States Army. He began his tour of duty with the rank of first lieutenant and ended it with the rank of major; and

Whereas, after his service in the army, Kenneth R. Williams returned to Winston-Salem State University where he was a history professor, a chaplain, the James A. Gray Professor of Religion, and the Dean of Men from 1946 to 1960; and

Whereas, as a result of the social and racial tensions in Winston-Salem and the subsequent unionization of the predominantly African-American workforces at R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, Local Union # 22 was formed. In the aftermath, of the 1944 Smith v. Allwright court decision outlawing the all-white voting primary, Local Union # 22's voter registration campaign increased the number of African-American voters in Winston-Salem from 300 to 3,000 in a two-year period; and

Whereas, in 1947, Kenneth R. Williams was elected as Winston-Salem's first African-American alderman; and

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams served as an alderman from 1947 to 1951; and

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams was appointed as executive vice-president of Winston-Salem State University in February 1961, as interim president in July 1961, and as president in 1962; and

Whereas, in 1963, Kenneth R. Williams was sponsored by the United States Department of State and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education to travel to Poland to study Polish institutions of higher education; and

Whereas, in 1972, Winston-Salem State University became part of The University of North Carolina System and Kenneth R. Williams was named Chancellor, a position he held until his retirement in 1977; and

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams was honored by Winston-Salem State University in 1975 when the 1,800-seat auditorium was named in his honor on campus; and

Whereas, in 1978, Kenneth R. Williams was named Chancellor Emeritus by the Winston-Salem State University Board of Trustees; and

Whereas, during Kenneth R. Williams' successful tenure at Winston-Salem State University, he began the business administration program, brought the nursing and teacher education programs to prominence, and created the Division of Student Affairs. He also established the R. J. Reynolds Scholars Program in 1970, which increased the pool of talented African-American students at the university; and

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams was a deeply religious man, serving as pastor of First Institution Baptist Church in Winston-Salem from 1937 to 1948 and as pastor of the West End Baptist Church in Winston-Salem from 1949 to 1960; and

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams was a devoted public servant, serving on numerous boards, commissions, and civic organizations, including the North Carolina Parole Board, Forsyth County Mental Health Association, Winston-Salem School Board, Library Board, Winston-Salem Hospital Commission, North Carolina Battleship Commission Board, Winston-Salem Urban League, National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Board, Winston-Salem Red Cross Board, Middle District Court of North Carolina Naturalization Committee, Board of Fellows of Gallaudet College, Northwestern Bank Board of Directors, and Board of Directors of Hospice of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, Inc.; and

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams received numerous awards and honors, including the Freedom Foundation Award and honorary doctorate degrees from Morehouse College, Wake Forest University, and Southern Illinois University; and

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams was included in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities, and Personalities of the South; and

Whereas, Kenneth R. Williams died on December 31, 1989, and is survived by his wife, Edythe Williams, and two sons, Norman Williams and Ronald Williams; and

Whereas, with the death of Kenneth R. Williams, his family, Forsyth County, and the State of North Carolina lost a good friend and colleague and an admired and truly distinguished citizen; Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

Section 1. The General Assembly expresses its deep appreciation for the life and accomplishments of Kenneth R. Williams and for the devoted and tireless service he rendered to Winston-Salem State University, the State of North Carolina, and his community.

Section 2. The General Assembly extends its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Kenneth R. Williams for the loss of their loved one.

Section 3. The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the family of Kenneth R. Williams.

Section 4. This resolution is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 3rd day of June, 1999.

Dennis A. Wicker
President of the Senate

James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives