



Louisville Metro Government

Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION NO. _____, SERIES 2016

A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JUDGE BENJAMIN SHOBE.

SPONSORED BY: COUNCILMEMBERS TANDY, BRYANT HAMILTON, GREEN, SHANKLIN, WOOLDRIDGE, JAMES, HOLLANDER, BENSON, STUCKEL AND BUTLER

WHEREAS, Benjamin Shobe was born on Oct. 2, 1920, in Bowling Green, KY and grew up in a black enclave called Jonesville. Both of his parents were educators with his father being the first African American to serve on the State Parole Board. Ben passed away on Friday, January 29, 2016 surrounded by his loved ones.

WHEREAS, Benjamin Shobe received his bachelor's degree from Kentucky State College in 1941. Shobe wanted to attend the University of Kentucky or the University of Louisville Law Schools, but blacks were not allowed to attend graduate or professional schools in the state of Kentucky at that time. Kentucky paid Shobe's tuition at the University of Michigan under the Anderson-Mayer Bill. This bill paid tuition for black students to attend out of state schools to pursue educational opportunities that were offered only to white students in Kentucky.

WHEREAS, In 1946, He earned his law degree and came back to Kentucky to use it to resolve the discrimination that would not allow him to earn it in Kentucky. In 1949, as a young attorney, Shobe participated with Justice Thurgood Marshall, James Nabritt, and James A. Crumlin in the celebrated higher education desegregation case of *Lyman T. Johnson verses University of Kentucky*. This successful lawsuit ended segregation at the University of Kentucky graduate schools and forced them to admit minorities to its graduate and professional schools.

WHEREAS, Shobe's career grew as he fought to integrate Louisville's public parks in the 1950s. In the early 1960s, Shobe defended teenagers arrested in protests that led to the passage of legislation to prohibit discrimination in hiring, housing and public accommodations.

WHEREAS, January 6, 1953 Shobe became the first African American since Reconstruction to serve

on the Circuit Court in Kentucky. While his initial appointment was only to substitute for one day, in 1973 Shobe was elected judge on the Police Court.

WHEREAS. In 1976, Gov. Julian Carroll appointed Shobe to the 15th Division of the Jefferson Circuit Court where he served until his retirement in 1992. For two of those years, Shobe was the first ever African American Chief Judge of the Jefferson Circuit Court with its 16 divisions.

WHEREAS, In 2006, The Louisville Bar Association and the Louis D. Brandeis American Inn of Court at Louisville Association developed the Judge Shobe Civility and Professionalism Award to recognize Louisville Bar Association members “whose lives and careers embody professionalism, civility, honesty and courtesy”, all trademarks portrayed by Shobe throughout his career, association officials said.

WHEREAS, Among his numerous accomplishments, Judge Shobe was named Judge of the Year by the Louisville Bar Association in 1992, and was also inducted into the Gallery of Great Black Kentuckians by the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights in 2006. Judge Shobe served as an Alternative Dispute Resolution Specialist with Retired Judges and Associates for several years before enjoying his retirement. In a 2012 a ceremony was held in the Judicial Center naming the jury assembly room in Judge Shobe’s honor.

and **WHEREAS,** Judge Shobe remained activity in his community even after retirement in 1992 as a Deacon at Portland Memorial Baptist Church, member of Ye Ole Esquires, Inc. and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. Left to cherish his memory is his wife of 43 years Barbara Kirby Shobe, his children Dr. Deanna Tinsley, Carole Anne Shobe, Benita Shobe, Benjamin W. Shobe, Deborah Shobe, Demetra Shobe, Cherria Leveston, Kirby Shobe, Ann Wallace, Charlene Fishback, and foster son Wayne Davis. Judge Benjamin Shobe not only served the Metro Louisville community but the state of Kentucky as fighter of civil rights and equity for all. Well done thy good and faithful servant.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE LOUISVILLE/JEFFERSON COUNTY METRO GOVERNMENT (THE COUNCIL) AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I: The Louisville Metro Council hereby adopts this Resolution Honoring the Life and Legacy of Judge Benjamin Shobe and urges all citizens of Metro Louisville to take notice.

SECTION II: This Resolution shall take effect upon its passage and approval.

_____ H.
Stephen Ott Metro Council Clerk

_____ David Yates
President of the Council

_____ Greg
Fischer Mayor

_____ Approval
Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

Michael J. O'Connell
Jefferson County Attorney

BY: _____