

RESOLUTION NO. _____ OF 2022

A RESOLUTION TO HONOR SHIRLEY WILLS FOR HER MANY YEARS OF EXEMPLARY CIVIC ACTIVISM AS A COMMUNITY LEADER AND AS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN ELECTED TO SERVE ON THE CADDO PARISH POLICE JURY, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO.

**BY: COUNCILMEMBERS JOHN NICKELSON AND
LEVETTE FULLER**

WHEREAS, on October 4, 1978, Shirley Wills was sworn in as the first African American woman elected to serve on the Caddo Parish Police Jury, the predecessor of the Caddo Parish Commission, where she represented the communities of Stoner Hill, Anderson Island, and portions of Allendale and Highland; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure as a police juror, from 1978 until 1984, Shirley Wills witnessed an era of extraordinary economic growth and infrastructure construction in Northwest Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the police jury, Shirley Wills successfully brought about improvements in street maintenance, solutions to critical drainage issues, and the increased availability of affordable housing; and

WHEREAS, she also played a major role in the equitable reapportionment of local districts within the municipality of Shreveport; and

WHEREAS, after her public service, Shirley Wills has continued in her role as an active participant in community affairs; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Wills is a dedicated civil rights activist and an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), as well as a former member of its Executive Board Committee; and

WHEREAS, to promote a closer sense of community and to recognize the good works of past civic activists, Shirley Wills had Stoner Hill Elementary School renamed for an exceptional educator and the school's pioneering principal, Elijah B. Williams; it is now known as the E.B. Williams Stoner Hill Elementary Lab School; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Wills sought to honor the community activism and spiritual leadership of the long-time pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church, the Reverend Dr. C.E. Galloway, and with her persistence, Hopewell Street was renamed C.E. Galloway Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, Shirley Wills dictated an oral history of her activism, culture, and professional life that may be heard at the Norton Art Gallery; and

WHEREAS, as a graduate of Shreveport Business College, Shirley Wills was employed by Western Electric, now AT&T, for thirty-two years, beginning in 1969, until her retirement in 2001; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Wills was married to the late Joe Robert Wills for fifty-two years until his passing; together they made a Christian family home and reaped the many blessings of God's love; and their union was blessed with two sons, Reverend Jerard Wills and the late Jerado Wills, and four precious grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Wills is a long-time member of St. Peter Baptist Church where she is quite active as a Sunday School teacher and as a board member on the Mission and Deaconess boards; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Wills is empowered by her faith in God and is encouraged by her favorite scripture from Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me"; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Wills is well aware that educational opportunities are vital to the growth and prosperity of any community; she is an avid supporter of the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) at Claiborne Elementary and Queensborough Elementary schools and an active alumnus of Booker T. Washington High School, Class of 1963.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Shreveport, acting in due, regular, and legal session convened, that the City Council hereby honors Shirley Wills for her many years of exemplary civic activism and as the first African American woman elected to serve on the Caddo Parish Police Jury.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be executed in duplicate originals with one original presented to Shirley Wills and the other resolution filed in perpetuity in the office of the Clerk of Council for the City of Shreveport.

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

City Attorney's Office