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7 A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION  
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12 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
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17 To honor the life and legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to commemorate his  
18 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday, and to designate Monday, January 16, 2023, as “Dr. King’s Celebration of  
19 Excellence featuring Howard University vs. Morehouse College Men’s Basketball” in the  
20 District of Columbia.  
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22 WHEREAS, Dr. King was raised in a home where education was a priority;

23 WHEREAS, at age 15, Dr. King was a scholar enrolled in Morehouse College in Atlanta,  
24 Georgia, a historically Black men’s liberal arts college, and graduated in 1948 with a Bachelor of  
25 Arts in Sociology;

26 WHEREAS, Dr. King was raised in a Christian home, was a spiritual and religious man,  
27 and decided to follow in the path of his father, a minister, by enrolling in his first integrated  
28 school, Crozer Theological Seminary in Upland, Pennsylvania, and graduated in 1951;

29 WHEREAS, Dr. King continued his educational and religious studies as a doctoral  
30 student at Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts, where he also audited philosophy classes  
31 at Harvard University, and earned his Doctor of Philosophy in Systemic Theology in 1955 at the  
32 age of 26;

33 WHEREAS, Dr. King led his family as husband and father, his churches as pastor, and  
34 the Southern Christian Leadership Conference as co-founder;

35 WHEREAS, Dr. King received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Howard  
36 University in 1957 alongside Jackie Robinson, Major League Baseball's first African-American  
37 player, and Patrick Murphy Malin, Director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU);

38 WHEREAS, Dr. King engaged in civil rights movement actions throughout the South,  
39 including the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, the student-led Atlanta Student Movement sit-  
40 ins beginning in 1960, the 1965 Alabama voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, and,  
41 of great import to the District of Columbia, the March on Washington on August 28, 1963 where  
42 he delivered the iconic "I Have a Dream" speech;

43 WHEREAS, Dr. King earned the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for his global efforts, having  
44 a transformative impact not just on African-American culture, but on American culture, and is  
45 quoted as saying, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort  
46 and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy";

47 WHEREAS, Dr. King recognized the political and symbolic power of sports, and  
48 understood athletic competitions and athletes could serve as a visible and vocal force to advance  
49 civil rights and social justice;

50 WHEREAS, each year in the District of Columbia, Howard University honors Dr. King's  
51 Celebration of Excellence by hosting nonconference men's basketball contests against iconic  
52 historical institutions;

53 WHEREAS, this year Howard University invited the Morehouse College to participate in  
54 the annual game, elevating the message of Dr. King by inviting student athletes from Dr. King's  
55 alma mater to Washington, DC for the athletic competition, and for continued community  
56 commitment towards Dr. King's social justice goals;

57           WHEREAS, this contest will take place in Burr Gymnasium which is where Dr. King  
58 gave his last ever address on Howard University's campus in 1966 as part of the seventh annual  
59 Gandhi Memorial Lecture Series;

60           WHEREAS, Howard University, founded in 1867, has furthered its mission to eliminate  
61 the inequities related to race, color, social, economic, and political circumstances and continues  
62 to develop some of the most talented Black scholars, activists, theologians, educators, and  
63 athletes for the benefit of the world;

64           WHEREAS, Howard University's Men's Basketball program features three District of  
65 Columbia natives on their roster: Team Captain Jelani Williams, Elijah Hawkins, and Marcus  
66 Dockery;

67           WHEREAS, three members of the coaching staff are also native to the District of  
68 Columbia: Head Coach Kenneth Blakeney, Assistant Coach Tyler Thornton, and Chief Program  
69 Strategist Daniel Marks;

70           WHEREAS, Morehouse College, founded as Augusta Theological Institute in 1867 in  
71 Augusta, Georgia, with the purpose of preparing African-American men for careers in theology  
72 and education, and later relocated to Atlanta, Georgia and renamed Morehouse College in 1913  
73 in honor of Henry L. Morehouse, the corresponding secretary of the Northern Baptist Home  
74 Mission Society;

75           WHEREAS, Morehouse College has been a leader in this country for developing men  
76 with disciplined minds who lead lives of leadership and service;

77           WHEREAS, Howard University Men's Basketball Coach Kenneth Blakeney and the  
78 Morehouse College Men's Basketball Coach Douglas Whittler both have strong commitment in

79 developing their respective HBCU athletic programs, and most importantly, in developing  
80 socially conscious young men committed to excellence embodied by both of their institutions;

81 WHEREAS, Coach Whittler will take his team to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial  
82 on Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup> for a gathering with Morehouse alumni to honor Dr. King’s legacy;

83 WHEREAS, Coach Blakeney challenged his team to honor the legacy of activism at  
84 Howard University by partaking in a season-long social justice project around an issue of their  
85 choosing, and took his team to multiple events at the 2022 Congressional Black Caucus Annual  
86 Legislative Conference;

87 WHEREAS, Howard University Men’s Basketball humbly decided to prioritize Black  
88 maternal health advocacy and has committed to volunteering with Mamatoto Village, an  
89 organization located in Ward 7 devoted to serving Black women through the creation of career  
90 pathways in maternal health and providing accessible perinatal support services to expectant  
91 Black mothers, for a community event to prepare pregnancy care kits as a team service activity,  
92 and has engaged in multiple conversations with the Congressional Black Caucus on these issues;

93 WHEREAS, both on and off the basketball court, the annual game honoring Dr. Martin  
94 Luther King, Jr.’s Celebration of Excellence stands as a demonstration of unity, collegiality, and  
95 sportsmanship.

96 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that this  
97 resolution may be cited as the “Dr. King’s Celebration of Excellence featuring Howard  
98 University vs. Morehouse College Men’s Basketball Recognition Resolution of 2023.”

99 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes the historic nature of this  
100 matchup, as well as the contributions of Howard University and Morehouse College in furthering  
101 the educational, spiritual, athletic, and moral development of their students, and declares

102 Monday, January 16, 2023, as “Dr. King’s Celebration of Excellence featuring Howard  
103 University vs. Morehouse College Men’s Basketball Day” in the District of Columbia.

104           Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in  
105 the District of Columbia Register.

DRAFT