

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To recognize and honor the beloved District resident, lawyer, author and anti-Apartheid activist, Randall Maurice Robinson, on the occasion of his passing on March 24, 2023.

WHEREAS, Mr. Robinson was born in in Richmond, VA on July 6, 1941;

WHEREAS, Robinson grew up in what he described as the “domestic apartheid system” of Jim Crow South, suffering indignities that inspired his future activism;

WHEREAS, following a stint in the Army, Robinson received a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Virginia Union University, a historically Black university, in 1967;

WHEREAS, in 1970, Robinson graduated from Harvard Law School;

WHEREAS, during the early 1970s, worked in the District for two members of Congress, Rep. William L. Clay Sr. of Missouri and Rep. Charles C. Diggs Jr. of Michigan, both founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus;

WHEREAS, in the late 1970s he became an active resident of the District of Columbia and chaired a working group which led to the creation of TransAfrica, which formed to protest White-minority rule in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe);

WHEREAS, Mr. Robinson led TransAfrica from its incorporation in 1977 until he stepped down as executive director in 2001;

WHEREAS, under Mr. Robinson’s leadership, TransAfrica became Black America’s premier foreign-policy think tank, earning the backing of Black celebrities including singer Harry Belafonte, tennis player Arthur Ashe, actors Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis, comedian Dick Gregory, and boxer Muhammad Ali;

WHEREAS, Mr. Robinson lead daily demonstrations in protest of apartheid outside of the South African embassy that led to thousands of arrests, including tennis player Arthur Ashe, singer Stevie Wonder, Delegate Walter Fauntroy, feminist leader Gloria Steinem and numerous members of Congress;

WHEREAS, the renowned organization — and Mr. Robinson in particular — was widely credited with forcing the United States to confront the apartheid regime in South Africa and push for the release of South African activist Nelson Mandela, who was imprisoned for 27 years under apartheid;

WHEREAS, Mr. Robinson’s activism also included a nearly month-long hunger strike which successfully led President Bill Clinton to grant would-be refugees asylum hearings;

51 WHEREAS, Mr. Robinson’s wrote several books, including “Defending the Spirit: A Black Life
52 in America”, “The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks”, in which he argued for reparations for the
53 descendants of enslaved people; and “The Reckoning: What Blacks Owe to Each Other.”
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55 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that this resolution
56 may be cited as the “Randall Maurice Robinson Memorial Recognition Resolution of 2023.”
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58 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia honors Randall Maurice Robinson’s legacy as
59 the foremost U.S. activist representing members of the African diaspora and expresses sincere
60 condolences to his family and loved ones.
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62 Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the
63 District of Columbia Register.