



Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To recognize and honor Mae H. Best on her retirement and her 23 years of exceptional leadership and service as the Executive Director of the East River Family Strengthening Collaborative, uplifting families and transforming communities in Ward 7.

WHEREAS, Mae H. Best took the helm as Executive Director of the East River Family Strengthening Collaborative (ERFSC) in June 2000, guiding the organization through its early years shortly after it achieved 501(c)(3) status, and transforming it into a cornerstone of support for families across Ward 7;

WHEREAS, under Mae H. Best's visionary leadership, ERFSC evolved from an organization focused on protecting children at risk of entering the child welfare system to one that serves entire families, from the youngest children to older adults, addressing the complex and diverse needs of Ward 7's residents;

WHEREAS, Mae H. Best spearheaded the development of numerous critical programs, including housing and employment assistance, parent education and support, truancy prevention, Safe Passages, case management services, and senior services, ensuring that ERFSC's reach extended to every corner of the community;

WHEREAS, under Mae H. Best's guidance, ERFSC established two Family Success Centers—at Benning Terrace/Benning Park and Benning Road/Minnesota Avenue—providing comprehensive resources to families, including assistance with housing stability, family support, and educational services, which have become vital hubs for families in need;

WHEREAS, Mae H. Best's unwavering dedication to the well-being of children, particularly those in the foster care system, began with her pioneering work in launching the Homes for Black Children program in Washington, DC, the first of its kind to focus on placing Black children with Black families, a program that forever changed the landscape of adoption services in the District;

WHEREAS, Mae H. Best's leadership extended beyond ERFSC, as she forged lasting partnerships with community organizations, government agencies, and national leaders, amplifying the impact of her work through collaboration and advocacy for equitable resources for Ward 7 families;

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46 WHEREAS, Mae H. Best’s tireless efforts helped ERFSC grow exponentially, increasing
47 the organization’s annual budget from \$750,000 to an impressive \$13,000,000, making it the
48 largest collaborative in the Healthy Families Thriving Communities network and ensuring
49 sustainable resources for the most vulnerable members of the community;

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51 WHEREAS, under Mae H. Best’s stewardship, ERFSC expanded its team from seven to
52 83 employees, cultivating a culture of care and service that continues to empower staff to carry
53 on her legacy of community-centered support;

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55 WHEREAS, Mae H. Best’s work has had a lasting impact on thousands of children,
56 families, and seniors throughout the District of Columbia, and her commitment to empowering
57 communities will be felt for generations to come;

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59 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that this
60 resolution may be cited as the “Mae H. Best Retirement Recognition Resolution of 2024.”

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62 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council extends its deepest gratitude to Mae H.
63 Best for her lifelong commitment to social work, community empowerment, and the betterment
64 of lives through her visionary leadership at the East River Family Strengthening Collaborative.

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66 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia honors and celebrates Mae H. Best on her
67 well-earned retirement, recognizing her 23 years of tireless service, transformative leadership,
68 and steadfast dedication to improving the lives of families in Ward 7 and across the District, and
69 expresses its confidence that her work will continue to inspire future generations of community
70 leaders.

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