

SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION

Honoring David J. “Dave” Dennis, Sr. for His Extraordinary Contributions to the Civil Rights Movement and His Lifelong Commitment to Justice, Equality, and Educational Opportunity

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission takes great pride in recognizing individuals whose courage, conviction, and dedication to the principles of freedom, justice, and human dignity have helped shape the course of American history, and whose lives remind us that the rights and opportunities enjoyed by succeeding generations were secured through the extraordinary sacrifices of those willing to challenge injustice; and

WHEREAS, Mr. David J. “Dave” Dennis, Sr., a native of Shreveport, Louisiana, has distinguished himself as a courageous organizer, leader, and enduring voice of the American Civil Rights Movement, devoting much of his life to the pursuit of racial equality, voting rights, educational opportunity, and the advancement of human dignity; and

WHEREAS, growing up in the segregated South, Mr. Dennis experienced firsthand the indignities and limitations imposed upon African Americans by discriminatory laws and practices, experiences that helped shape his understanding of injustice and inspired his commitment to creating a more equitable society; and

WHEREAS, as a young man, Mr. Dennis became involved with the Congress of Racial Equality, commonly known as CORE, participating in nonviolent demonstrations challenging segregation and making the courageous decision to devote himself to the struggle for civil rights at a time when such participation carried the very real possibility of arrest, violence, and even death; and

WHEREAS, in 1961, Mr. Dennis participated in the historic Freedom Rides, traveling from Montgomery, Alabama, to Jackson, Mississippi, to challenge racial segregation in interstate transportation, and enduring imprisonment for his participation in a movement that helped bring national attention to the continued denial of constitutional rights and equal treatment under the law; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dennis's commitment to justice also extended directly to Shreveport and Caddo Parish, where he helped organize civil rights activities and challenge segregation, including efforts to desegregate the Shreveport Trailways bus terminal, demonstrating that the struggle for equality was not merely a distant national movement, but an urgent and deeply personal undertaking within our own community; and

WHEREAS, as Director of Mississippi CORE and Co-Director of the Council of Federated Organizations, commonly known as COFO, Mr. Dennis worked alongside such distinguished civil rights leaders as Bob Moses, Medgar Evers, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., helping coordinate grassroots efforts to confront racial discrimination, strengthen community organizing, and secure the fundamental rights of African American citizens; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dennis played a pivotal leadership role in the historic Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964, helping organize an ambitious campaign that brought hundreds of volunteers to Mississippi to support voter registration, establish Freedom Schools, and challenge the systematic disenfranchisement and intimidation of African American citizens; and

WHEREAS, the extraordinary dangers faced by these activists were tragically demonstrated by the murders of civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner in Neshoba County, Mississippi, during the summer of 1964, and Mr. Dennis's powerful and impassioned eulogy at the funeral of James Chaney became an enduring expression of the grief, frustration, courage, and determination of a generation unwilling to accept injustice as an inevitable condition of American life; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dennis's firsthand experiences and reflections on the Civil Rights Movement have been preserved through numerous historical accounts and documentaries, including the landmark PBS series *Eyes on the Prize*, helping ensure that future generations understand both the sacrifices and the extraordinary achievements of those who struggled to expand the promise of American democracy; and

WHEREAS, following his years of grassroots organizing, Mr. Dennis continued his education, graduating from Dillard University in 1968 and earning his law degree from the University of Michigan Law School in 1971, subsequently applying his knowledge and experience to the continued pursuit of justice and equal opportunity; and

WHEREAS, beginning in the late 1980s, Mr. Dennis renewed his collaboration with fellow civil rights leader Bob Moses through the Algebra Project, an innovative educational initiative dedicated to improving mathematics education and expanding academic opportunities for underserved students, recognizing that meaningful equality requires not only the protection of legal rights, but also access to the knowledge and skills necessary for full participation in society; and

WHEREAS, through his work in education, Mr. Dennis helped carry forward the central principles of the Civil Rights Movement into a new generation, demonstrating that the pursuit of justice is an ongoing responsibility and that educational opportunity is essential to economic advancement, personal empowerment, and the realization of individual potential; and

WHEREAS, in collaboration with his son, David Dennis, Jr., Mr. Dennis co-authored the 2022 memoir *The Movement Made Us: A Father, a Son, and the Legacy of a Freedom Ride*, preserving an intimate and important account of the Civil Rights Movement and its lasting influence upon the lives, relationships, and experiences of those who participated in the struggle; and

WHEREAS, his extraordinary contributions have earned national recognition, including his 2024 induction into the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame in the category of Civil Rights, affirming the enduring significance of his work and his place among those whose efforts helped advance the promise of American democracy; and

WHEREAS, on Friday, October 30, 2026, the North Louisiana Civil Rights Coalition will host its *Evening in Noir and Blanc*, featuring Mr. Dennis as its distinguished guest speaker and honoring his remarkable life, historic accomplishments, and continuing contributions to the advancement of civil rights and educational opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission commends the North Louisiana Civil Rights Coalition for its efforts to preserve the history of the Civil Rights Movement, recognize those who helped bring about meaningful social change, and provide opportunities for the citizens of Northwest Louisiana to learn from the experiences and wisdom of individuals whose courage helped transform our nation; and

WHEREAS, it is particularly meaningful for the citizens of Caddo Parish to welcome and honor Mr. Dennis in his hometown, recognizing that his early efforts to challenge segregation in Shreveport were part of a lifetime of leadership that would influence the course of American history and inspire generations of advocates for justice and equality; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dennis's remarkable life reminds us that progress is neither automatic nor inevitable, but is achieved through the courage, determination, and sacrifice of individuals who recognize injustice, refuse to remain silent, and accept the responsibility of helping create a better future for others;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Caddo Parish Commission, in regular session convened, does hereby proudly recognize and honor **MR. DAVID J. “DAVE” DENNIS, SR.** for his extraordinary contributions to the American Civil Rights Movement, his courageous leadership in the struggle for racial equality and voting rights, and his lifelong commitment to justice, educational opportunity, and the dignity of all people.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission expresses its profound appreciation for Mr. Dennis's historic efforts to challenge segregation in Shreveport and throughout the South, recognizing the personal sacrifices he and countless others made to advance the rights and freedoms that form the foundation of our democracy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission joins the North Louisiana Civil Rights Coalition in celebrating Mr. Dennis during its *Evening in Noir and Blanc* on October 30, 2026, and commends the organization for its commitment to honoring the courageous individuals whose leadership and sacrifice helped shape the history of our community and nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission celebrates Mr. Dennis as an enduring example of principled leadership, moral courage, and the power of individual action to bring about meaningful social change, and encourages future generations to learn from his experiences and carry forward the ideals of equality, justice, and opportunity for which he has devoted his life.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this Special Resolution be presented to Mr. David J. “Dave” Dennis, Sr. during the North Louisiana Civil Rights Coalition's *Evening in Noir and Blanc* as a lasting expression of the admiration, gratitude, and respect of the Caddo Parish Commission and the citizens of Caddo Parish, in recognition of a remarkable life of service and a legacy that will continue to inspire generations yet to come.

ADOPTED by the Caddo Parish Commission on this ____ day of _____, 2026.