

NEW HANOVER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING THE WILLISTON SENIOR HIGH CLASSES OF 1969 AND 1970
2023 HONORARY GRADUATION CEREMONY

WHEREAS, Williston Senior High School, known to many of its alumni as “the greatest school under the sun,” was an all-Black high school and a source of excellent educational opportunities and community pride for African Americans; and

WHEREAS, Williston’s first high school class graduated in 1923, and for 45 years its graduates served the community and nation in a wide variety of roles; and

WHEREAS, on June 26, 1968, despite over a decade of resistance to desegregation efforts, the New Hanover County Board of Education made the decision to close Williston Senior High School and relocate its African American students to New Hanover and John T. Hoggard high schools; and

WHEREAS, the sophomore and junior classes of Williston Senior High School, who were enrolled during the 1967-1968 school year left their school thinking they would return, but were summarily denied the opportunity to graduate from a school that had stood at the center of civic life for New Hanover County’s Black community for decades; and

WHEREAS, the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners acknowledges the issues of local governmental institutions to comply with the United States Supreme Court 1954 decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, which called for school integration; and

WHEREAS, the classes of 1969 and 1970 rose above the challenges created by the decision to close the school by taking a decisive stance to move forward and rise above racism to make innumerable contributions here in New Hanover County and beyond.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners acknowledges the decision to close Williston Senior High School exacerbated tensions within the County and expresses a long overdue congratulations to the Williston Senior High classes of 1969 and 1970. The Board hopes the July 1, 2023 graduation ceremony helps to contribute to the ongoing healing for the graduates and the community.

ADOPTED this 19th day of June, 2023.



NEW HANOVER COUNTY


William E. Rivenbark, Chair

ATTEST:


Kimberleigh G. Crowell, Clerk to the Board