



Date: July 21, 2025
To: All Media Partners
Release: *Immediate*

MEDIA STATEMENT

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Mourns the Loss of Mr. James Ferguson – Civil Rights Attorney Instrumental in Desegregation

Charlotte, NC – The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education issues the following statement:

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education and the many members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) team mourn the passing of Mr. James Ferguson – a great leader, attorney, and civil rights activist instrumental in integrating public schools.

Ferguson will forever be remembered for a life of great purpose. With a sharp legal mind, a passion for doing what's right, and a vision for an integrated educational experience, he fought for desegregation at a time in our society that made it impossible for students of different races to learn together and from each other.

In a 1969 landmark case, *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, Ferguson advanced a busing plan that led to CMS being what it is today – a vibrant school district that honors the many experiences that each and every child brings to their schools, teachers, and most importantly their classmates.

He started fighting for desegregation locally, and took his passion internationally when he founded South Africa's first Trial Advocacy Program that served black and white lawyers.

But no matter how far his influence reached, he will always be considered a Charlotte legend. Many people who did not know him personally regard him for being a fantastic trial lawyer and civil rights activist. And although those things are very true, he was so much more.

As several board members can attest to, he had the ability to gather community members in a way that allowed each and every person to share ideas, engage in community celebration, and see that they were more alike than they thought. He

–more–

was a fantastic dad. He had a deep appreciation for the arts. Board members have shared that Mr. Ferguson's ability to lead by example, profoundly influenced their life and their future pursuits.

"Our thoughts are with his family at this time for their loss of a great man," shares Chairperson Stephanie Sneed. "The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education is thankful for Mr. Ferguson's dedication to the education of black students, his vision for integrating schools, and the courage he demonstrated in making Charlotte, North Carolina and the world a better place."