

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUCL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT
COMMEMORATING AND CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'s, SPEECH AT BOOKER T. WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM**

WHEREAS, on Tuesday, November 27, 1962, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered a speech to the residents of Rocky Mount and Eastern North Carolina at the Booker T. Washington High School Gymnasium;

AND WHEREAS, at the time of his speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a nationally-recognized civil rights leader whose work and accomplishments already consisted of the following,

Delivering his first public speech in 1944 in Dublin, Georgia, at the age of 15,

Earning a Bachelor's Degree from Morehouse College in 1948 at the age of 19,

Earning a Bachelor of Divinity from Crozer Theological Summary in 1951,

Joining the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity's Boston Sigma Chapter in 1952,

Becoming Pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama in 1954,

Earned a Ph.D. in Theology from Boston University in 1955,

Serving as a spokesman of the 1955-1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott, which led to the desegregation of local public transportation,

Co-founding and becoming President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957, a position he would hold until his death, and through which he implemented numerous campaigns of civil disobedience to bring national attention to and abolish practices of racial segregation, which he outlined in his 1958 book, *Stride Toward Freedom*,

Becoming Co-Pastor with his father at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia in 1960, and

Participating in the 1960 sit-in campaign to end racial segregation in Atlanta, Georgia, businesses, for which he was sentenced to State Prison,

AND WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King was invited as early as 1958 by Pastor George Dudley of Rocky Mount's Mount Zion First Baptist Church to visit and speak to the residents of Rocky Mount,

AND WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King gave a speech titled "Facing the Challenge of a New Age" to an audience of approximately 1,800 on Tuesday, November 27, 1962, at the Booker T. Washington High School Gymnasium in Rocky Mount,

AND WHEREAS, in the conclusion of his 55-minute speech, Dr. Martin Luther King spoke the following words,

"And so my friends of Rocky Mount, I have a dream tonight. It is a dream rooted deeply in the American dream..."

AND WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King closed with the following pronouncement,

“We will be standing here, we will be able to sing with new meaning

My country, tis of thee,

Sweet land of liberty,

Of thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died,

Land of the pilgrims’ pride,

May every mountain side,

Let freedom ring.

That must become true all over America if this is to be a great nation.

Yes, Let it ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire,

Let it ring from the mighty mountains of New York,

Let it ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania,

Let it ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado,

Let it ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that, from every mountain side let freedom ring.

So let it ring from Stone Mountain in Georgia,

Let it ring from Lookout Mountain in Tennessee.

Let it ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

Let it ring from every mountain of North Carolina,

From every mountain side, let freedom ring.

And when this happens all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, protestants and Catholics, “will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old negro spiritual . . . free at last, free at last, thank God almighty we are free at last!””

AND WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King would use these same words and pronouncements in the conclusion of his speech entitled “I Have a Dream” delivered at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963, at the National Mall in Washington, DC,

AND WHEREAS, these words represent the mandate we have as Americans and human beings to refuse to accept or allow segregation and advocate and implement civil rights, equality, and freedom for all,

AND WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King's delivery of these words for the first time in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, at Booker T. Washington High School Gymnasium on November 27, 1962, will always remain a prominent moment in the history of our City,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA, that we commemorate and celebrate the 60th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's speech at Booker T. Washington High School in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, on November 27, 1962,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council encourage all residents and individuals to read, listen, and study the speech delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King in Rocky Mount and do their best to embody and advocate its message,

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Rocky Mount should continue to take appropriate actions to commemorate and promote this historic event and its enduring, timeless message, including the preservation of its location, Booker T. Washington High School Gymnasium.