



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 740

Resolution calling for the Council of the City of New York to highlight and honor the life and achievements of Judge William H. Booth.

By Council Members Comrie, Gonzalez, Nelson, Sanders Jr., Seabrook and Weprin

Whereas, Judge William H. Booth, well known as a civil rights leader who challenged racial discrimination in employment, housing, education, and other fields, died on December 12, 2006, at the age of eighty-four; and

Whereas, In a career that embraced law, politics and civil rights over nearly six decades, Mr. Booth exemplified civil rights leadership at an early age by becoming president of the Jamaica youth chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. at age 16 and thereafter became New York State president of the N.A.A.C.P.; and

Whereas, Judge Booth graduated from Jamaica High School, served his country as an Army Air Force master sergeant in World War II, resumed his studies and graduated from Queens College in 1946, and earned a law degree and a master's in law from New York University; and

Whereas, Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Booth set forth an ambitious agenda as chairman of the city's Commission on Human Rights from 1966 to 1969, during a time when New York seethed with racial tensions, protest demonstrations, and street rioting, as he ordered opened commission meetings, established field offices around the city to take complaints and begin investigations, subpoenaed data on racial composition of companies and unions, filed lawsuits, issued cease-and-desist orders, and threatened to cut off the city contracts of corporations that violated discrimination laws; and

Whereas, William H. Booth, appointed to a Criminal Court judgeship by Mayor John V. Lindsay in 1969, and subsequently from 1976 to 1982 serving as an acting justice of State Supreme Court in Brooklyn,

served thirteen years on the bench, making an indelible mark on the justice system; and

Whereas, In 1987, Governor Mario M. Cuomo named Mr. Booth to a task force on bias-related violence and in 1991, Mayor David N. Dinkins appointed him chairman of the city's Board of Correction, where he monitored policies and conditions in the jail system; and

Whereas, Mr. Booth's passion for justice led him to southern states to investigate discrimination cases and he joined the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in marches and civil rights activities; and

Whereas, Undeterred by controversy, Judge Booth made contributions to the judicial system and to society at large that will be long remembered; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York honors the life and achievements of Judge William H. Booth.

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