

Ms. Susie V. Castillo, Board Member

Co-Sponsor: Dr. Larry Feldman, Vice-Chair

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SUBJECT: REQUEST APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 15-073 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND IMPACT OF EUGENIA B. THOMAS IN EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: INFORMED, ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Eugenia B. Thomas was a pioneering public servant who used her gifts and talents to do her utmost to help children and families, and to lead her community and the state in ways that has left a legacy that will live for generations to come. Mrs. Thomas was honored for her many contributions to education through the naming of the Eugenia B. Thomas K-8 Center in the City of Doral. Her commitment to education, children and the community earned her many accolades and awards, but her determination to improve society and address issues concerning children made her an icon in the community.

Born in Atlanta in 1924, Mrs. Thomas was raised during the Great Depression. Her family lived in such abject poverty that her mother was forced to give up her children for adoption. This sacrificial act had a lasting effect on Mrs. Thomas' view of the value of a safe and stable environment for children. In 1929, she was brought to Miami where the Bell family adopted her. Mr. Bell, a horticulturist and prominent Deacon, and his wife, Sarah Bell, opened their home to young Eugenia and raised her as their own. She attended Booker T. Washington High School where she graduated as class valedictorian in 1940.

After high school, she attended Florida Memorial University and graduated with Magna Cum Laude in 1945. She then graduated from Biscayne Development Executives and Fordham School of Public Speaking and went to work as a Dade County administrator, and later as a legal secretary for many years.

In 1953, Mrs. Thomas married Lawson E. Thomas, who became the first African-American judge in the South since Reconstruction. He was very influential in the African-American community and together they made solid imprints in Miami's history. Throughout her lifelong dedication to community service, Mrs. Thomas was honored with many awards, including the Sarah Blocker Meritorious Service Award from Florida Memorial University, The Black Archives – 2005 Pioneer Family of Miami, the Distinguished Service Citation from The Rotary Club of Doral, and the Outstanding Achievement as Florida PTA President from Zeta Phi Beta Sorority's Beta Tau Zeta Chapter.

ACTION PROPOSED BY MS. SUSIE CASTILLO: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 15-073 of the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing Eugenia B. Thomas In Education and Community Advocacy.

**RESOLUTION NO. 15-073
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
RECOGNIZING EUGENIA B. THOMAS IN EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ADVOCACY**

WHEREAS, Eugenia B. Thomas was a pioneering public servant who used her gifts and talents to do her utmost to help children and families, and to lead her community and the state in ways that has left a legacy that will live for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Thomas was honored for her many contributions to education through the naming of the Eugenia B. Thomas K-8 Center in the city of Doral. Her commitment to education, children and the community earned her many accolades and awards, but her determination to improve society and address issues concerning children made her an icon in the community; and

WHEREAS, born in Atlanta in 1924, Mrs. Thomas was raised during the Great Depression. Her family lived in such abject poverty that her mother was forced to give up her children for adoption. This sacrificial act had a lasting effect on Mrs. Thomas' view of the value of a safe and stable environment for children; and

WHEREAS, in 1929, she was brought to Miami where the Bell family adopted her. Mr. Bell, a horticulturist and prominent Deacon, and his wife, Sarah Bell, opened their home to young Eugenia and raised her as their own. She attended Booker T. Washington High School where she graduated as class valedictorian in 1940; and

WHEREAS, after high school, she attended Florida Memorial University and graduated with Magna Cum Laude in 1945. She then graduated from Biscayne Development Executives and Fordham School of Public Speaking and went to work as a Dade County administrator, and later as a legal secretary for many years; and

WHEREAS, in 1953, Mrs. Thomas married Lawson E. Thomas, who became the first African-American judge in the South since Reconstruction. He was very influential in the African-American community and together they made solid imprints in Miami's history; and

WHEREAS, throughout her lifelong dedication to community service, Mrs. Thomas was honored with many awards, including the Sarah Blocker Meritorious Service Award from Florida Memorial University, The Black Archives – 2005 Pioneer Family of Miami, the Distinguished Service Citation from The Rotary Club of Doral, and the Outstanding Achievement as Florida PTA President from Zeta Phi Beta Sorority's Beta Tau Zeta Chapter;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 15-073 of the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing Eugenia B. Thomas in Education and Community Advocacy.

A copy of this resolution is placed in the permanent records of this Board.

Presented this ninth day of September, A.D. 2015

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CHAIR

ATTEST:
