

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 19-041 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, HONORING FORMER CITY OF MIAMI POLICE CHIEF CLARENCE DICKSON**

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**COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: INFORMED, ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS**

Clarence Dickson joined the City of Miami Police Department shortly after serving 4 years in the United States Air Force. He came to Miami as the result of a transfer by the U.S. Air Force to fly training missions over water to sharpen the navigational skills of Pilots. He was an Airborne Radio Operator. Just out of the Air Force and recently coming to Miami, he did not know that the black community had been fighting for years to get black recruits into the academy.

Dickson joined the City of Miami Police Department in 1960. He did not know at the time, that he was the first African American to enter the segregated City of Miami Police Academy. In 1960, under Jim Crow Law, the City of Miami, was one of the few departments in the country that actually had a Police Academy. But it prohibited blacks from attending. They received on the job training by other black officers. Not to single out Miami, this type of racial prejudice in law enforcement was prevalent throughout the United States.

He remembers during the fourth week of training, his class was assigned to go out and ride with real police officers, and to attend a real roll call, on a one-day weekend experience. When he arrived at his designated location it was at the "Negro Police Precinct." The rest of his class, all White, reported to the Main Police Headquarters. Clarence did not even know the "Negro Precinct" existed. He did not know that the police department was segregated.

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Facing obstacles and internal challenges, he prayed, buckled down, got serious and graduated #2 in his class". This class began with 45, and ended with 13, they really made it tough. Based on what the black officer at the precinct had told him, Dickson suspected it was designed to wash him out, if so, it backfired. He states; the words of a black officer in the Negro Precinct "don't let us down" has rung in my ears during my entire career with the Miami Police Department. It has motivated me in everything that I have done during my 29 years, up to the day I retired".

When he was appointed Chief, the Miami Herald did a historical search of data on his career path with the Miami Police Department.

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They discovered that he was not featured in the class graduation picture that hung on the wall at the police academy, though he did take a picture with his class of 1960. But unbeknownst to him, the class was ordered back later without him to take a picture that reflected an all-white graduating class. This was an example of the discriminatory practices of those days in the 1960s. The administration had no way of knowing, nor would they have believed, that they were eliminating from this photo, the Department's first African American Police Chief.

Chief Dickson states "I am satisfied that I did my best and I am satisfied, that I did not let those black Officers down, nor the citizens of Miami, nor the Miami Police Department as a whole." As a testament to Chief Dickson's success, he was succeeded by two other African American Police Chiefs, Perry Anderson and Calvin Ross, who as well, served with distinction and honor.

Chief Dickson is the proud husband of Gwendolyn Green Dickson and the father of two daughters, Traci M. Dickson Aveni and Raquel Y. Dickson King and two sons Clarence Dickson Jr. and Phillip R. Dickson.

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**ACTION PROPOSED BY**

**DR. DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approved Resolution No. 19-041 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, honoring Former City of Miami Police Chief Clarence Dickson.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 19-041  
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FLORIDA,  
HONORING FORMER CHIEF CLARENCE DICKSON**

**WHEREAS**, In June of 1960, just out of the Air Force and new to Miami, Mr. Dickson unaware that African Americans had been fighting for years to get black recruits into the Miami Police Academy, graduated in Miami Police Department Class #44; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Dickson encounter with a black police officer led him to join the Police force. In 1960, while at a bus stop waiting to go to work he was approached by a Black Officer who started asking him questions; and

**WHEREAS**, the officer was impressed with Mr. Dickson's work ethic and said, "Why don't you go and take the test?" recounted Mr. Dickson "What test?" The officer responded, "the police test." At the time, Miami was still segregated with Black officers only being allowed to patrol Miami's black neighborhoods: Liberty City, Coconut Grove and Overtown, also called the Central Negro District; and

**WHEREAS**, black officers were forced to take special routes to avoid driving through white communities and could only reach the status of Patrolmen because they were not graduates of the Police Academy. Before Mr. Dickson, black officers received peer-to-peer on-the-job training. They were not allowed in the all-white police academy, and

**WHEREAS**, while preparing for a ride along during police academy one of the black officers walked over and said, "Some of us lost our jobs fighting to get blacks into the academy, don't let us down." Mr. Clarence Dickson, who was flunking out of the academy at that time, worked tirelessly and became the first black graduate of the City of Miami Police Academy and rose to become Miami's first black police chief in 1985.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 19-041 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing Former City of Miami Police Chief. Clarence Dickson.

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

**Presented this nineteenth day of June, A.D. 2019**

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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CHAIR

ATTEST:

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Secretary