



Legislation Text

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To commemorate Columbus City Council's 2019 Black History Program by honoring and celebrating the lifetime achievements, contributions and transformational Leadership of James Preston Poindexter in Public Service.

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus and the members of Columbus City Council are proud to honor and celebrate the legends, legacies, and trailblazers of this community as they represent the prosperity and the transformational leadership that has come to define the tradition of excellence that is Columbus; and

WHEREAS, Columbus City Council's 2019 Black History Program is proud to honor the legacy and transformational leadership of James Preston Poindexter as a shining light in the field of public service - Poindexter was a clergyman, abolitionist, politician, and civil rights activist - he was born in Richmond, Virginia and spent his early years there, at the age of 10, he became an apprentice barber and worked in the profession throughout his life - ultimately he spent the majority of his life in Columbus creating a legacy in public service and activism; and

WHEREAS, Poindexter joined Second Baptist Church after arriving in Columbus - In 1847 Poindexter and others learned that a black family who had recently joined the church after also relocating to Columbus from Virginia had previously been slaveholders in Virginia - in protest Poindexter and forty other Second Baptist Church members withdrew to form an Anti-Slavery Baptist Church which he led for the next ten years until the congregation rejoined the Second Baptist Church in 1858 - Poindexter, now an ordained minister, became the pastor of the combined church and he remained in this position until his resignation in 1898; and

WHEREAS, Poindexter was a major supporter of the Underground Railroad in Ohio - he was an Underground Railroad conductor and helped fugitive slaves with their journey to Canada - during the Civil War he and his wife formed the Colored Soldiers Relief Society giving soldiers and their families' assistance, as the State of Ohio refused to support black veterans - in 1870 the 15th Amendment allowed the black vote in Ohio, this allowed Poindexter to begin his political career - In January of 1871 he led the call for a statewide convention for African American men to encourage voting - two years later he was nominated by the Republican Party for a seat in the Ohio House of Representatives which he lost, however in 1880 he became the first African American elected to Columbus City Council - Re-elected in 1882 he remained in the seat until 1884 when he was named to the Board of Trustees of the Ohio School for the Blind - In 1884 he was appointed to the Columbus Board of Education and was re-elected four times - he was nominated by Democratic Governor George Hoadley to the Board of Directors at Ohio University but the nomination was blocked by the Ohio State Legislature; in 1887 he was named to the Board of Directors for the State Forestry Bureau and in 1896 was appointed to the Board of Trustees of Wilberforce University, an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) College located in Xenia, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, James P. Poindexter died on February 7, 1907 after a prolonged bout with pneumonia - his funeral was attended by nearly 2,000 people, making it one of largest funerals in Columbus history, now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS: That this Council does hereby honor and celebrate the lifetime achievements and contributions of James Preston Poindexter and present his foundation with the 2019 James Preston Poindexter Award for being a Shining Light and Transformational Leader in the Faith Community.

