



Councilmember LaRuby May

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To recognize and honor Dovey Johnson Roundtree, for outstanding service to the District of Columbia;

WHEREAS, Dovey Johnson Roundtree was born on April 17, 1914 in North Carolina to James Eliot Johnson and Lela Bryant Johnson;

WHEREAS, Dovey Johnson Roundtree worked her way through Spelman College from 1934 to 1938, at the height of the Great Depression;

WHEREAS, Dovey Johnson Roundtree came to the District of Columbia to train as an officers in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC);

WHEREAS, Dovey Johnson Roundtree publicly challenged racial discrimination in the Army even as she recruited other African American women for the WAAC on assignment in the Deep South;

WHEREAS, Dovey Johnson Roundtree believing that the greatest instrument for social change was the law, enrolled at Howard University School of Law in the fall of 1947;

WHEREAS, from 1947 to 1950, Dovey Johnson Roundtree immersed herself in the assault on school segregation being mounted by Thurgood Marshall and Howard Law professors James Madison Nabrit, Jr. and George E.C. Hayes which in 1954 culminated in the epochal Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education decision;

WHEREAS, in 1952, during her first year of legal practice, Dovey Johnson Roundtree, along with her partner and mentor Julius Winfield Robertson, took on a bus

45 desegregation case that would make legal history: Sarah Keys v. Carolina
46 Coach Company (1955);

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48 WHEREAS, on November 7, 1955, as a result of Sarah Keys v. Carolina Coach
49 Company, in a historic ruling the Interstate Commerce Commission departed
50 from its long history of adherence to the Plessy v. Ferguson banning separate
51 but equal for the first time in the field of interstate bus travel;

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53 WHEREAS, Dovey Johnson Roundtree and her partner Julius Robertson represented
54 black clients in civil and criminal matters in the segregated courtrooms of the
55 District of Columbia and their 1957 victory in a negligence case against a
56 psychiatric facility was widely regarded as a turning point not only for black
57 clients in the Nation's Capital, but for black attorneys as well;

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59 WHEREAS, Dovey Johnson Roundtree became an ordained minister of the African
60 Methodist Episcopal Church on November 30, 1961;

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62 WHEREAS, Dovey Johnson Roundtree's successful defense of the black laborer
63 accused of the 1964 murder of Mary Pinchot Meyer solidified her reputation in
64 the District of Columbia legal community;

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66 WHEREAS, Dovey Johnson Roundtree forged a unique role for herself, melding her
67 ministerial duties at Washington's Allen Chapel AME Church with her legal
68 practice, concentrating her focus on family and ecumenical law;

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70 WHEREAS, Dovey Johnson Roundtree was awarded: the 1995 Distinguished
71 Alumna Award from the Howard Law Alumni Of Greater Washington, the
72 1995 National Bar Association Charlotte E. Ray Award, the 1996 Spirit of
73 Spelman College Founder's Day Award, the American Bar Association's 2000
74 Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award, the 2004 Living
75 Legacy Award from the Howard University School of Divinity, and the 2006
76 Award of Excellence from the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund;

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78 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
79 resolution may be cited as the "Dovey Johnson Roundtree Recognition
80 Resolution of 2016."

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82 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes and honors Dovey Johnson
83 Roundtree for her constant devotion and service to the citizens of the District
84 of Columbia.

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86 Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication
87 in the District of Columbia Register.