

Resolution Honoring the Legacy of Mr. W. J. Michael (Mike) Cody

WHEREAS, on occasion, the Memphis City Council sees fit to name public roads to honor citizens who have served the community, and **Mr. W. J. Michael (Mike) Cody** is a citizen whose personal accomplishments and contributions to the City of Memphis are certainly worthy of recognition; and

WHEREAS, **Mike Cody** has a stellar educational background evident from graduating from Rhodes College in 1958 with a Bachelor of Arts with distinction, Omicron Delta Kappa, from the University of Virginia in 1961 with a Juris Doctorate, Phi Delta Phi, and receiving an Honorary Doctor of Law in 1989 from Rhodes College where he served as a Distinguished Adjunct Professor since 2018; and

WHEREAS, **Mike Cody's** legal career spans more than 60 years; he leaves a legacy of professional and public service to the City of Memphis, the State of Tennessee, and the United States legal community, where he began practicing at Burch, Porter, and Johnson in 1961; served on the Memphis City Council from 1975-1977, served as the United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee from 1977-1981, and served as the Attorney General of Tennessee from 1984-1988; and

WHEREAS, **Mike Cody** has been described as a moving force in the legal community for writing, speaking, and working on hallmark issues at the heart of the City of Memphis and the nation, such as ethics for attorneys, ethics in public service, topics related to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the fairness and morality of the death penalty, and excluding the mentally ill from the death penalty; and

WHEREAS, **Mike Cody** has achieved numerous impactful honors and accomplishments, some of which include that he represented Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in court, personally argued four cases before the United States Supreme Court, served as an adjunct professor at Lemoyne Owen College, Memphis State University School of Law, Vanderbilt University School of Law, and Rhodes College, was named *Best Lawyers*® "Lawyer of the Year" for Arbitration and Mediation in the Memphis area in 2024 and was named to the list of Best Lawyers in America© from 2006-2024, received the Tri-State Defender newspaper's 65th Anniversary Legend Honor in 2017, helped to establish the Memphis Area Legal Services, and received the City of Memphis' highest honor, the Luminary Award in 2020; and

WHEREAS, **Mike Cody** excelled in a number of sports, particularly running, when he began running track competitively at East High School and later at Southwestern at Memphis (now Rhodes College) where he was a student. He competed in numerous races and marathons, notably at least 12 Boston Marathons, logging well over 80,000 miles during the course of his lifetime. In recognition of his athletic achievements Mike was inducted into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 1993 and into the Rhodes Athletic Hall of Fame in 1998; and

WHEREAS, **Mike Cody's** legacy includes more than a stellar career; the true legacy he leaves behind is a standard of excellence, quality of character, and a commitment of service to family, friends, loved ones, colleagues, and the community. Mike is survived by his wife, Suzanna Marten Cody; his daughters, Jane Cody (Scott Simpson) of Corrales, NM, and Mia Cody of Memphis; a son, Michael Cody (Nicole) of Germantown; three grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Memphis City Council honors and remembers **Mr. W. J. Michael (Mike) Cody** for the lifetime of service that he provided to the City of Memphis and the local, state, and national legal community for over six decades and that the section of N. Court Ave. between Main and Second shall be designated and always remembered as

W. J. Michael Cody Street

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Engineer is requested to affix suitable signs so designating such public road.

Adopted: November 26, 2024

Sponsor:
Jerri Green

Chairman:
JB Smiley, Jr.