

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN IDA B. WELLS MEMORIAL AT THE CORNER
OF BEALE STREET AND FOURTH STREET**

WHEREAS, Ida B. Wells was born on July 16, 1862 in Holly Springs, Mississippi, and moved to the City of Memphis in 1883; and

WHEREAS, as a Memphis resident in 1889, Ida B. Wells became co-owner and editor of *Free Speech and Headlight*, an anti-segregationist newspaper based within our municipal limits that published articles about racial injustice; and

WHEREAS, in her role as co-owner and editor of *Free Speech and Headlight*, Ida B. Wells conducted investigative journalism about the prevalence of lynching, printing many articles in an effort to combat the atrocities; and

WHEREAS, in doing so, Ida B. Wells gained international acclaim as an anti-lynching advocate, a champion of civil rights, and powerful voice in the fight for women's suffrage – leading her to work alongside Frederick Douglass and other related luminaries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries; and

WHEREAS, despite her work in service to mankind, Ida B. Wells was the recipient of threats, as well as the victim of abuse, when her outspokenness led to her newspaper office and printing presses, located at the corner of Beale Street and Fourth Street, being destroyed by a mob of citizens following her reporting of Memphis lynchings in March of 1892; she was then run out of the City, and forced to seek refuge in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, not to be deterred, Ida B. Wells continued her crusade for equality, working with the *Chicago Conservator*, the oldest African-American newspaper in the city; forming the Women's Era Club, the first civic organization for African-American women which later became the Ida B. Wells Club in honor of its founder; and travelling throughout the United Kingdom and the United States teaching and giving speeches to bring awareness to the lynching problems in America; and

WHEREAS, Ida B. Wells spent forty-two years toiling to improve conditions for the most marginalized among us, it is now time that we recognize her invaluable contributions to local and national life by entreating Memphians and visitors alike to emulate her sense of selflessness within their own lives via a physical reminder of her life's worthy pursuits; and

WHEREAS, the Memphis Memorial Committee, in partnership with the Neshoba Community Resource Center, has raised the funds to erect a bronze life-sized statue in honor of Ida B. Wells, the Council is of the belief that said statue should be placed within the City, and at the physical site, where her herculean efforts first took shape, i.e., at the corner of Beale Street and Fourth Street in Downtown Memphis.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Memphis City Council authorizes an Ida B. Wells memorial at the corner of Beale Street and Fourth Street.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Memphis City Council requests that the Administration develop a plan to ensure the placement of said memorial at the corner of Beale Street and Fourth Street to the extent feasible; this resolution shall take effect from and after its passage, the welfare of the City requiring it.

Sponsor:
Councilman Jeff Warren, M.D.