



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR, CITY OF GREENVILLE

Proclamation

WHEREAS, Mr. Willie Nelms has served the City of Greenville and Pitt County since February 16, 1981 as the Director of Libraries;

WHEREAS, Mr. Willie Nelms has an impressive and endless history of accomplishments as the Director of Libraries;

WHEREAS, since day one of his appointment by the Board of Trustees of the Sheppard Memorial Library, Mr. Nelms has provided leadership to improving public library service to our community making sure that the libraries of Greenville, Winterville, and Bethel, North Carolina provide the best materials and services to all members of the public who need them;

WHEREAS, in 1981, his recommendation of extending public hours for library services by opening on Sunday has enabled citizens who work Monday through Friday to have access to the unique resources and services offered by the Sheppard Memorial Library, otherwise they would be unable to use this facility's services. This service was provided by Sheppard Memorial Library before any other public library in Eastern North Carolina;

WHEREAS, during his tenure as Director of Libraries, the total number of hours of library service to the public expanded from 119 per week in 1980 to 260 per week in 2010; registered library borrowers increased from 15,589 in 1980 to 51,000 in 2010; items borrowed from the library increased from 202,000 to 550,000 plus in 2010; and book collection in 1980 was 123,405 and as of February 2010 it was 280,358;

WHEREAS, Mr. Nelms won the North Carolina Public Library Directors Association Building Improvement Awards four times between 1990 and 2005. He is responsible for 8 building projects in 29 plus years, which is one every 44 months or one every 3 years and 8 months. Mr. Nelms was involved in building projects for Sheppard Memorial, Carver, East Branch, Winterville, and Bethel libraries that totaled \$9,030,000. In essence, from 2000 to 2005, he helped design and see that more library space was built for the public library system than all the space that had been built in history prior to that time;

WHEREAS Mr. Nelms made Sheppard Memorial Library a leader in microcomputer technology among public libraries in North Carolina. He introduced the first microcomputers to library operation in 1981. Sheppard Memorial Library is a model that other public library systems have used to measure themselves against when comparing services, practices and technology;

WHEREAS Mr. Nelms won grants in a very competitive library grant-seeking environment that brought in hundreds of thousands of dollars of state, federal and other funding for things ranging from bookmobiles to buildings to books, to computers for the public. In addition, he led the formation of the Friends of the Sheppard Memorial Library in 1991 and employed the innovative technique of using matching funds from the Friends of the Library as seed money for grants thus multiplying the amount of money available. In a competitive grant process, Mr. Nelms won two national traveling exhibits for display at the Sheppard Memorial Library in the early 2000s: "George Washington: A National Treasure" and "Go Figure", a hands-on children's math program;

WHEREAS, Mr. Nelms has written library-related articles that were selected for publishing in professional journals and books including the critically acclaimed book, Cora Wilson Stewart: Crusader Against Illiteracy (McFarland Publishing, 1997) and "The Art of Overdues" which was published in Public Library Quarterly in 1989;

WHEREAS, he has served on many North Carolina Library Association committees, on the State Library of North Carolina Library Services and Technology Act Committee, and as President of the North Carolina Public Library Directors Association;

WHEREAS, Mr. Nelms also has a history of giving back to our community serving as President of the Greenville Noon Rotary Club in the early 1990s and a member of the Board of Literacy Volunteers of America-Pitt County. He is the founder of the Pitt-Greenville Soccer Association and served as its president for the first five years of the organization's existence, and he created and coached the first Greenville Stars Soccer team. In addition, Mr. Nelms is an Elder and Sunday school teacher at the First Presbyterian Church in Greenville; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Willie Nelms' last day of work as Director of Libraries is July 23, 2010 and his official retirement is to commence the 1st day of August, 2010.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Patricia C. Dunn, Mayor of the City of Greenville, do hereby proclaim Friday, July 23, 2010 as

WILLIE NELMS DAY

in Greenville and commend Mr. Willie Nelms for his many years of tireless service to the City of Greenville and Pitt County libraries and to thank him for his commitment and numerous contributions to our city.

This 23rd day of July, 2010.

Patricia C. Dunn, Mayor