

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(11)

TO: Honorable Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: November 15, 2022

FROM: Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution recognizing
November 17, 2022, and each
year thereafter, as Omega Psi Phi
Day in Miami-Dade County

The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Kionne L. McGhee.



Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

GBK/uw

MDC001



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(Revised)

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Please note any items checked.

- "3-Day Rule" for committees applicable if raised
- 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- Budget required
- Statement of fiscal impact required
- Statement of social equity required
- Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor's report for public hearing
- No committee review
- Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's present ____, 2/3 membership ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous ____, CDMP 7 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) ____, CDMP 2/3 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) ____, or CDMP 9 vote requirement per 2-116.1(4)(c)(2) ____) to approve
- Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(11)
11-15-22

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING NOVEMBER 17, 2022, AND
EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, AS OMEGA PSI PHI DAY IN
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

WHEREAS, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. (“Omega Psi Phi”) is the first international fraternal organization founded on the campus of a historically black college; and

WHEREAS, on the evening of November 17, 1911, three Howard University undergraduate students, with the assistance of their faculty adviser, gave birth to the Fraternity; and

WHEREAS, this event occurred in the office of biology Professor Ernest E. Just, the faculty adviser, in the Science Hall (now known as Thirkield Hall); and

WHEREAS, the founders were three undergraduate liberal arts students — Edgar Amos Love, Oscar James Cooper and Frank Coleman; and

WHEREAS, during this first meeting, the name of the organization was derived from the initials of the Greek phrase meaning, “friendship is essential to the soul”, as symbolized by three Greek letters ΩΨΦ - Omega Psi Phi - which are the initials of the three Greek words - *Ophelima Philia Psurkis* - and the phrase was selected as the motto; and

WHEREAS, during the same meeting, Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance and Uplift were adopted as the four cardinal principles of the Fraternity and the founders decided upon the design of the Fraternity’s pin and escutcheon; and

WHEREAS, on November 23, 1911, Edgar A. Love became the first Grand Basileus (National President), and Oscar J. Cooper and Frank Coleman were selected to be the Grand Keeper of the Records (National Secretary) and Grand Keeper of Seals (National Treasurer), respectively; and

WHEREAS, the Alpha Chapter of the Fraternity was organized with fourteen charter members on December 15, 1911, with eleven Howard University undergraduate men carefully selected as charter members, along with Love, Cooper, and Coleman; and

WHEREAS, Cooper became the Fraternity's second Grand Basileus in 1912 and authorized the investigation of establishing a second chapter on the campus of Lincoln University located in Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, in 1912, Howard University officials did not initially recognize the Fraternity as a national organization and Omega Psi Phi's leadership refused to accept limited recognition. As a result, the Fraternity operated without official sanction, until the university withdrew its opposition in 1914, the same year the Beta Chapter of the Fraternity was chartered at Lincoln University; and

WHEREAS, Omega Psi Phi was incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia on October 28, 1914; and

WHEREAS, In April 1917, the U.S. entered WWI and Omega men played a pivotal role in petitioning the Secretary of War for the establishment of an Officers Training Camp for African American men. The 17th Provisional Training Camp was established at Ft. Des Moines from June to October 1917, and 16 members participated in the Camp including founders Edgar Love and Frank Coleman; and

WHEREAS, recognizing an opportunity for brotherhood and growth, these members petitioned Grand Basileus James C. McMorries for the establishment of a temporary chapter at Ft. Des Moines; and

WHEREAS, permission was granted and the fourth chapter of the Fraternity, the War Chapter, was established which initiated a total of ten men into the fold; and

WHEREAS, additionally, recognizing the success of the War Chapter, the Fraternity established a temporary chapter, Camp Howard Chapter, during the Student Army Training Camp at Howard University, which was held to train college men as military instructors for their colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, over 450 men from 70 colleges and universities attended the Camp from August 1 to September 16, 1918; and

WHEREAS, during the brief time of the Camp Howard Chapter, 27 men from nine different colleges and universities were initiated into the Fraternity; and

WHEREAS, like the War Chapter, the Camp Howard Chapter laid the foundation of exponential growth for the Fraternity post-WWI; and

WHEREAS, in the Spring of 1919, Stanley Douglas served as Editor of the first publication of the Oracle, which is a scholarly publication containing literary work intended to be more insightful and thought-provoking than its forerunner, and features the aristocracy of Omega Psi Phi intellect; and

WHEREAS, over a century later, the magazine remains in publication; and

WHEREAS, during the Nashville Grand Conclave in 1920 Carter G. Woodson, an honorary member of the organization, inspired the establishment of National Achievement Week, a mandated program of the Fraternity, that was originally designed to promote the study of African American life and history and, in 1976, this commemoration evolved into Black History Month; and

WHEREAS, in 1927, at Woodson's urging, Omega Psi Phi made National Negro Achievement Week an annual observance; and

WHEREAS, presently, the Achievement Week Program recognizes those individuals at the local and national levels who have made significant contributions toward improving the quality of life for African Americans; and

WHEREAS, in 1922, Grand Basileus J. Alston Atkins divided the fraternity into five districts: the New England States, the Middle Atlantic States, the Central States, the Southern States, and the Western States; and

WHEREAS, over the next century, Omega Psi Phi built a strong and effective force of men dedicated to its cardinal principles; and

WHEREAS, in 1923, when a chapter was organized at the University of Southern California, Omega Psi Phi became the first Black Greek organization to span its membership across the United States - from the Atlantic (Iota in Atlantic City) to the Pacific (Lambda in Los Angeles) and organized a chapter in Montreal, Quebec (Canada) the same year; and

WHEREAS, in 1930, Omega Psi Phi became one of five founding members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council with 13th Grand Basileus Matthew W. Bullock elected as its first permanent chairman; and

WHEREAS, in 1935, a redistricting occurred, and the seventh district was created, which was composed of three states: Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. The state of Mississippi was added to the seventh district in 1941; and

WHEREAS, by the mid-1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Federal Council of Negro Affairs or “Black Cabinet,” which was an informal group of African-American public policy advisors who were organized to help the country emerge out of the depression; and

WHEREAS, the Fraternity’s members Robert C. Weaver, Lawrence Oxley, Roscoe Brown, Frank Horne, William Hastie, J. Arthur Weiseger, Ted Poston, Campbell C. Johnson and William Trent were among those who served on the cabinet; and

WHEREAS, over the next few decades, thousands of Omega men in every area of the country were committed to social change and were actively involved in the fight to eliminate racial discrimination; and

WHEREAS, Omega Psi Phi members were active participants in the “sit-ins” and other demonstrations designed to call attention to the plight of Black Americans; and

WHEREAS, the state of Florida was the first state to create a state organization of Omega Psi Phi in 1974; and

WHEREAS, through the years the Seventh District has been one of the great standard bearers in the fraternity. The ideas of the Lampados Club, the Leadership Conference, an inspector general, data-based mechanization for membership, a modernized registration process with photos on identification badges, state organizations, and utilization of digital in lieu of paper reports all originated in the Seventh District; and

WHEREAS, South Florida, and Miami-Dade County, has produced many leaders in the Fraternity. In 1976, Brother Edward Braynon was elected Grand Basileus. Since that time two other brothers from South Florida have served the fraternity as Grand Basileus: Brother Dorsey C. Miller and Brother George Grace; and

WHEREAS, on November 24, 1991, the Omega Activity Center of Miami-Dade was dedicated. The two-story 9,000 square foot building is located immediately south of the Florida Memorial University campus. The Omega Activity Center serves as Sigma Alpha Chapter's meeting place and is also very popular for events such as weddings, wedding receptions, banquets, luncheons, and political rallies; and

WHEREAS, Miami-Dade County is home to three undergraduate and three graduate chapters: Sigma Alpha (North Dade), Kappa Gamma (Florida Memorial University), Pi Nu (South Dade), Omicron Delta (The University of Miami), Alpha Delta Eta (Florida International University), and Zeta Nu Nu (Downtown Miami); and

WHEREAS, since its humble beginnings on the Howard University campus, Omega Psi Phi continues to be on the front line, leveraging its power, influence and more than 100 years of commitment to the uplift of its people and its communities; and

WHEREAS, Omega continued to flourish, largely because Founders Love, Cooper, Coleman and Just were men of the very highest ideals and intellect, and selected and attracted men of similar ideals and characteristics; and

WHEREAS, it is not by accident that many of America's great black men are and were Omega Men; and

WHEREAS, Omega Psi Phi has a current membership that includes more than 100,000 living brothers, over 700 chapters, and the Fraternity operates in 20 countries; and

WHEREAS, to this date, there are very few Americans whose lives have not been touched by a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity; and

WHEREAS, this Board believes Omega Psi Phi has a rich heritage which should be protected, celebrated and enhanced,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that this Board recognizes November 17, 2022, and each year thereafter, as Omega Psi Phi Day in Miami-Dade County.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Commissioner Kionne L. McGhee. It was offered by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner _____ and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Jose "Pepe" Diaz, Chairman	
Oliver G. Gilbert, III, Vice-Chairman	
Sen. René García	Keon Hardemon
Sally A. Heyman	Danielle Cohen Higgins
Eileen Higgins	Kionne L. McGhee
Jean Monestime	Raquel A. Regalado
Rebeca Sosa	Sen. Javier D. Souto

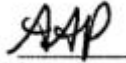
The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 15th day of November, 2022. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.



Ashlee A. Pouncy