

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 430

Approved November 13, 2024

WHEREAS, On November 14, 1960, six-year-old Ruby Bridges was one of six Black children to pass the test that determined whether or not they could go to the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans, LA; and

WHEREAS, Of the six children who passed the test, two of the children decided to stay at their old school, and Ruby Bridges went to William Frantz Elementary School by herself, as the only African American student to attend the school; and

WHEREAS, Everyday U.S. Marshals had to escort young Ruby and her mother to school where a crowd of people who didn't want her at the school yelled things at her; and

WHEREAS, As soon as Ruby Bridges entered the school, white parents pulled their own children out, and all the teachers except one refused to teach while a black child was enrolled in the school; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Henry, originally from Boston, MA was the only teacher that would teach Ruby Bridges and for the entire year Ms. Henry taught Ruby Bridges alone in the classroom; and

WHEREAS, There were threats to poison Ruby's food, so the U.S. Marshals assigned to protect her only allowed her to eat food brought from home; and

WHEREAS, The threats to Ruby extended to her family as well. Her father lost his job and the grocery store where the family shopped would no longer let them shop there, and her grandparents who were sharecroppers in Mississippi, were turned off their land; and

WHEREAS, Despite the threats and protests, the Bridges family was determined to keep sending Ruby to school; she didn't miss a single day of class that year; and

WHEREAS, Over time, other African American students enrolled into William Frantz Elementary School, and many years later Ruby Bridges' four nieces attended the school made famous by their brave Aunt Ruby; and

WHEREAS, In 1964 artist Norman Rockwell celebrated Ruby Bridges' courage with a painting of Ruby's first day of school entitled "The Problem We All Live With"; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Bridges went on to graduate from a desegregated high school, became a travel agent, married and raised a family. Ms. Bridges also wrote several books about her experiences as a child and she received the Carter G. Woodson Book Award for her work; and

WHEREAS, In 1999 Ruby Bridges established The Ruby Bridges Foundation to promote tolerance and create change through education and in 2000, Ms. Bridges was made an honorary deputy marshal in a ceremony in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, In 2001 Ruby Bridges was awarded the United States Presidential Citizens Medal for her bravery and service to our nation; and

WHEREAS, Ruby Bridges has asserted that, "Racism is a grown-up disease and we must stop using our children to spread it"; and

WHEREAS, Every year on November 14th students, staff, and teachers at participating schools honor Ms. Bridges and the courage she carried to walk through the doors of William Franz Elementary School in 1960 by gathering before school begins, and families are asked to line up and walk through the school's gates while teachers, staff, and families welcome the students with words of love and encouragement to start the day.

NOW THERE IT BE RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council proclaims November 14th to be Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day in Providence, Rhode Island.

IN CITY COUNCIL
NOV 07 2024
READ AND PASSED

Rachel M. Miller

RACHEL M. MILLER, PRESIDENT
Jana L. Mastrosimone

CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

Butt P. Silly

Mayor
Date: *11/13/24*
