

DURHAM BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

*Resolution*

**PRIVATE FIRST-CLASS BOOKER T. SPICELY**

- WHEREAS,** Durham County Board of County Commissioners recognizes the importance of learning, preserving, and understanding the County’s full and complex history which includes those moments that reflect both the progress and challenges that have shaped the community; and
- WHEREAS,** Durham County Board of County Commissioners recognizes the value of an honest acknowledgement of the people, events, and experiences that have defined our local past, which strengthens civic understanding, promotes unity, and ensures that future generations can learn from the lessons of history; and
- WHEREAS,** Private First-Class Booker T. Spicely, a Black soldier, was born in 1909 and served honorably in the United States Army during World War II, stationed at Camp Butner in Granville County, North Carolina; and
- WHEREAS,** On July 8, 1944, 11 years before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, Private First Class Spicely while traveling in uniform on a public bus in Durham, North Carolina, objected to racially discriminatory Jim Crow practices after being ordered to move to the rear of the bus despite his military service to the nation; and
- WHEREAS,** Private First Class Spicely was fatally shot by the white bus driver, Herman Lee Council, near the intersection of Pettigrew Street and Concord Street in Durham; and
- WHEREAS,** Herman Lee Council was acquitted of all charges by an all-white jury after just 28 minutes of deliberation; and
- WHEREAS,** the tragic killing of Private First Class Spicely drew national attention to racial violence and injustice, inspiring renewed efforts among civil rights leaders and organizations, including the NAACP and the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs, to confront systemic discrimination in North Carolina and across the United States; and
- WHEREAS,** the loss of Private First Class Spicely represents a pivotal moment in Durham’s, and the nation’s, civil rights history serving as a reminder of the sacrifices endured by African American service members who defended democracy abroad while being denied its full promise at home; and
- WHEREAS,** Private First-Class Spicely’s service to our country as a soldier and as a citizen who demanded equality should be honored; and
- WHEREAS,** The County of Durham seeks to honor Private First-Class Spicely’s courage, dignity, and ultimate sacrifice, recognizing his contribution to both the military defense of the United States and the broader struggle for racial equality and justice.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that we, the members of the Durham County Board of Commissioners, do hereby resolve to honor and recognize the life and legacy of

**PRIVATE FIRST-CLASS BOOKER T. SPICELY**

acknowledging his service to the United States Army, his courage in the face of injustice, and the lasting impact of his story on the pursuit of civil rights and equality. We honor the bravery of Private First-Class Booker T. Spicely and his efforts to promote true democracy, and we urge all residents and visitors to reflect on his life and legacy.

This the 24<sup>th</sup> day of November 2025.

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Nida Allam, Chair

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Dr. Mike Lee, Vice Chair

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Michelle Burton, Commissioner

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Wendy Jacobs, Commissioner

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Stephen Valentine, Commissioner

