

DURHAM BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Resolution

JUDGE WILLIS P. WHICHARD

- WHEREAS,** Judge Willis Padgett Whichard was born in Durham’s Watts Hospital to Willis G. Whichard and Beulah Padgett Whichard on May 24, 1940, and passed on November 18, 2025; and
- WHEREAS,** he devoted his life to public service, distinguishing himself as the only North Carolinian to serve in his home state’s House of Representatives (1970 – 1974), Senate (1974 – 1980), Court of Appeals (1980 – 1986), and Supreme Court (1986 – 1998); and
- WHEREAS,** Judge Whichard sponsored House bills to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment and the Coastal Area Management Act, demonstrating a commitment to justice he carried through to his service as dean of the Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law at Campbell University (1999 – 2006) where he contributed to the Juvenile Justice Project, now the Restorative Justice Clinic, the law school’s longest-running pro-bono clinic; and
- WHEREAS,** he was a passionate writer and historian who published two award-winning biographies of James Iredell and David Lowry Swain, served as the president of the Watauga Club (1994 – 1995), served as president of the North Carolina Literacy and Historical Association (1995 – 1997), and chaired the NC Humanities Council (2005 – 2007); and
- WHEREAS,** Judge Whichard devoted his time and treasure to the Durham Library Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization that supports Durham’s libraries, for which he served as founding president (2000 – 2009), and was a longstanding member of the library’s Board of Trustees (2018 – 2025), a body which he chaired from 2024 – 2025; and
- WHEREAS,** as a proud North Carolinian, Judge Whichard established the Willis P. and Leona P. Whichard Endowment for the North Carolina Collection, housed at Main Library, which preserves and makes available materials related to the history of the City and County of Durham as well as other North Carolina topics; and
- WHEREAS,** Judge Whichard was a shining example of integrity in public service, advocacy for equal rights, and a passion for lifelong learning.

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

JUDGE WILLIS P. WHICHARD

In acknowledgment of his service to his native Durham and the state of North Carolina.

This the 9th day of February 2026.

Dr. Mike Lee, Chair

Nida Allam, Vice Chair

Michelle Burton, Commissioner

Wendy Jacobs, Commissioner

Stephen Valentine, Commissioner

