

RESOLUTION R-21-124

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA, DESIGNATING THE MANATEE COUNTY LAW LIBRARY AS THE HONORABLE LAYON F. ROBINSON, II LAW LIBRARY; AUTHORIZING THE PLACEMENT OF APPROPRIATE SIGNAGE OUTSIDE AND WITHIN THE LIBRARY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, Layon Franklin Robinson, II was born on September 15, 1943 in Wray, Georgia to Layon and Emmalou Robinson; and

WHEREAS, Layon's family settled in Albion, New York, where he graduated from Albion Central High School in 1962; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Robinson began college at Bryant & Stratton Business Institute and studied real estate at the University of Buffalo wherein he became the youngest person in the State of New York to obtain a New York Real Estate License; and

WHEREAS, in 1963 Layon enlisted in the United States Air Force. Mr. Robinson was stationed at various Air Force bases throughout his military career including: Homestead, Florida; Lackland, Texas; McGuire, New Jersey, and Newfoundland, Canada. Mr. Robinson was honorably discharged on February 13, 1967; and

WHEREAS, in July 1964 Layon married his wife, Davine Elizabeth Strong. Together they were married for fifty-one years and raised four children: Delon, Layna, Layon III, and Darine; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Robinson then graduated from Florida State University with a bachelor's degree in 1970 and a juris doctorate degree in December 1972; and

WHEREAS, in 1973 Mr. Robinson passed the Florida Bar Examination and became the first African American member of the Manatee County Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Robinson began his legal career as an Assistant State Attorney in the Felony Division for the Twelfth Judicial Circuit in Sarasota County, Florida; and

WHEREAS, in September 1973 Mr. Robinson taught Black History at Manatee Junior College; and

WHEREAS, in 1974 Mr. Robinson began working for the State Attorney in Manatee County and was later appointed as Special Prosecutor of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit by Judge Harry Parham; and

WHEREAS, in February 1977, Mr. Robinson started his private practice with fellow State Attorney colleague Richard Buckle; and

WHEREAS, throughout his legal career Mr. Robinson represented various Manatee County citizen groups including: members of the Washington Gardens community who opposed development of the neighboring area into duplexes rather than single-family homes; members of the Memphis community in opposition to commercial zoning changes in their residential neighborhood; the citizen group tasked with the reorganization of and the creation of the bylaws for the Samoset Fire Department and its Fire Commission; and the investors aspiring to revitalize downtown Bradenton with the renovation of the Capri Theatre; and

WHEREAS, in 1978 Mr. Robinson served on the Manatee County Economic Development Council, which was successful in qualifying Manatee County to receive federal grant funds to support diversifying the County's economy. As part of the process, the Council identified and prioritized thirteen projects these funds could be instrumental in achieving. Notable projects include, the civic center, a multilevel parking garage in downtown Bradenton, a new county jail, and improvements at Port Manatee; and

WHEREAS, in 1978 Mr. Robinson developed the first grant for Manatee County Rural Health Services (MCR) to provide federally qualified affordable healthcare and medication to the citizens of Manatee County. Further, Mr. Robinson secured and wrote the first charter and bylaws for MCR. He served as the first Chairman of the Board and recruited other members of the community to serve on MCR's governing board. He also served as corporate counsel for approximately twenty-five years; and

WHEREAS, in March 1978 Mr. Robinson was appointed to the Community Development Block Grant Citizen Workshop group; and

WHEREAS, in 1980 Mr. Robinson was elected President of Manatee County Children's Services, a not-for-profit children's advocacy center serving child victims of abuse; and

WHEREAS, in 1989 Mr. Robinson formed the local chapter of the Police Athletic League (PAL). He wrote the first charter and bylaws and served as its first chairman. Mr. Robinson was instrumental in recruiting Bradenton Police Chief Vic Badalamenti as the first Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of PAL. PAL operated under the auspices of the city police department for approximately three years. Mr. Robinson then recruited Manatee County Sherriff Charlie Wells to serve as CEO. Under Sherriff Wells' leadership, PAL provided recreational programs, nutritional assistance, and started its first charter school. The PAL program operated five independent charter schools at the height of its operations: and

WHEREAS, in 2016 Mr. Robinson was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Robinson was known as a generous and devoted public servant throughout his life. His integrity and ambition have not only been instrumental in the

growth and development of Manatee County, but served as an inspiration for its citizens; and

WHEREAS, Manatee County Resolution R-93-156, allows for the naming of a County facility or location for an individual that has “demonstrated integrity, contribution to the community, and patriotism”; and

WHEREAS, based on the foregoing, the Manatee County Board of County Commissioners finds that Mr. Robinson’s integrity and the innumerable positive contributions to this community more than qualify him for the honor bestowed by the Board of County Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, Manatee County has complied with all procedural requirements to make this dedication as provided for in Resolution R-93-156; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners finds that it is in the best interests of the County to adopt this Resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Manatee County, Florida, as follows.

1. The Manatee County Law Library is hereby named and designated as the “The Honorable Layon F. Robinson, II Law Library.”
2. The County Administrator (or his designee) is hereby authorized and directed to work on the design, content, and placement of suitable signage outside and within the Law Library to memorialize this designation.
3. This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption.

DULY ADOPTED with a quorum present and voting this 10th day of August 2021.



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

By: _____
Chairperson

ATTEST: ANGELINA COLONNESO
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER

By: Wendi Jessner
Deputy Clerk