



**WAKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PROCLAMATION
Recognizing and Honoring Freedom Books
Book Store**

WHEREAS, Freedom Books was founded in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1984 by Ajamu and Rakiyah Dillahunt and became Raleigh's first African American bookstore, serving the community for ten years until its closing in 1994; and

WHEREAS, located for most of its existence at the corner of East Martin and South Blount Streets in downtown Raleigh, across from Moore Square, Freedom Books became a vital cultural, educational, and civic institution for residents throughout Wake County and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Freedom Books was more than a bookstore—it was a gathering place where community members engaged with literature, history, current events, and ideas that expanded understanding of the Black experience, social justice, international affairs, and the pursuit of equity and human dignity; and

WHEREAS, Freedom Books fostered intellectual curiosity, civic engagement, and community empowerment by hosting educational forums, encouraging critical dialogue, and providing access to books and resources often unavailable elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, Freedom Books played a significant role in advancing racial, economic, and gender justice in Raleigh and served as a catalyst for community action and leadership development among young people; and

WHEREAS, Freedom Books was sustained through the dedication of the Dillahunt family, including daughters Dara, Kemba, and Safiya Dillahunt, whose contributions helped strengthen the bookstore's role as a cornerstone of community life; and

WHEREAS, during its decade of operation, Freedom Books cultivated a deeper understanding of African American history and culture while connecting community members to conversations about local, national, and international issues, inspiring generations of readers, activists, educators, and leaders; and

WHEREAS, the legacy of Freedom Books continues to inspire new generations through its example of education, activism, cultural preservation, and community empowerment; and

WHEREAS, on July 8, 2026, the Gregg Museum of Art & Design at North Carolina State University will honor the history and contributions of Freedom Books through a Community Stories exhibition featuring photographs, videos, archival materials, and firsthand accounts documenting the bookstore's profound influence on Raleigh and Wake County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Wake County Board of Commissioners hereby recognizes and honors **Freedom Books** for its groundbreaking contributions to African American history, literacy, civic engagement, cultural awareness, and social justice in Wake County and the City of Raleigh. Residents, community organizations, educators, students, and local institutions are encouraged to reflect upon and celebrate the enduring legacy of Freedom Books.

ADOPTED this the 6th day of July 2026.

Donald Mial, Chair
Wake County Board of Commissioners