

Resolution NO.: R- 2020 -02

Remembering and Honoring the Legacy of Sarah Mae Flemming Brown Civil Right Activist

WHEREAS, Sarah Mae Flemming Brown exhibited unfathomable courage and boldness to challenge one the social injustices of her day; and,

WHEREAS, the fight for equal rights on public transportation did not begin with Rosa Parks in Birmingham, Alabama as many people believe; and

WHEREAS, in South Carolina it began with a twenty-year old African American young woman named Sarah Mae Flemming Brown from Eastover, South Carolina.; and

WHEREAS, by faith and unshakable confidence in her inherent civil rights, on June 22, 1954, Sarah was on her way home from her job as a maid and was ordered by the bus driver to give up her seat in the front of the bus; and

WHEREAS, according to Flemming's testimony two years later, the driver, Warren H. Christmus, told her, "can't you wait until someone get off the bus before you sit down? Get up and I mean right now." She was sitting in front of two white persons.

WHEREAS, Sarah apparently did not know that blacks were to always stand, even if whites did not need the seats; and

WHEREAS, embarrassed, Sarah pulled the cord for the next stop, located at Main and Washington streets, despite it being more than two miles from her employer's home. According to Sarah, Christmas blocked her from exiting the front of the bus with a punch, forcing her down the aisle to the rear door causing her to go to the hospital, where she was examined and released; and

WHEREAS, by faith Sarah endured humiliation and argued against segregation on Columbia buses in the Federal court and then in the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia; and


WHEREAS, her heroism, though unuttered for a time, served as the foundation for the success of the Browder v. Gayle U.S. Supreme Court case that was sparked by Rosa Parks' defiant deed; and

WHEREAS, Fleming's heroic act and determination served as a powerful example for individuals such as Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as they continued the quest for justice and equality; Now Therefore,

WHEREAS, the Comet Bus System that provides service to Eastover and the Lower Richland Community honored Ms. Sarah Flemming Brown by reserving a seat on the bus for her and a picture of her at the Eastover Library.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that on this 23rd day of June 2020 Mayor and the Town Council of Eastover honor Mrs. Sarah Mae Flemming Brown for her remarkable courage

Signed:


Geraldene Robinson, Mayor