STUDENT SENATE RESOLUTION 2015-1042

TITLE: Student Body Resolution Honoring the Victims of the Emanuel Nine Shooting

AUTHOR (S): Student Body Treasurer Nicholas Carre, Senator Brendon Jonassaint


WHEREAS, on June 17, 2015, a mass shooting occurred at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Carolina, the oldest African Methodist Episcopal Church in the South and the oldest historically Black congregation south of Baltimore\(^1\); and,

WHEREAS, the mass shooting resulted in the loss of nine innocent lives including: Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, 54, manager of the Charleston County Public Library system; Tywanza Sanders, 26, a recent graduate of Allen University; Rev. Daniel Simmons, 74, a pastor; Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, 45, a pastor, speech therapist, and track coach; Myra Thompson, 59, a Bible study teacher; Depayn Middleton-Doctor, 49, a pastor and admissions coordinator at the Charleston campus of Southern Wesleyan University; Ethel Lee Lance, 70, a church employee of more than thirty years; Susie Jackson, 87, a church choir member and cousin of Ethel Lee Lance; and Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney, 41, pastor of the Emmanuel AME Church and South Carolina State Senator that fought for equal protection for all under the law\(^2\); and,

WHEREAS, the suspect, 21 year old Dylan Roof, entered the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church on that evening of June 17, 2015, read from the Bible along with the other attendees and, after an hour of Bible study, stood up, retrieved a .45-caliber pistol, and fired upon the unsuspecting congregants\(^3\); and,

WHEREAS, the suspect created a manifesto prior to the shooting that stated Black people are “stupid and violent,” Hispanic people are “a huge problem for Americans,” Jewish people are an “enigma,” East Asian people are “very racist,” adding that he hates “the sight of the American Flag”\(^4\); and,

WHEREAS, any discrimination on the basis of race or religion threatens the freedom and multicultural democracy guaranteed under the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution of the United States of America; and,

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama delivered a eulogy at the funeral of Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney, which brought together more than 6,000 congregants and a televised national audience to mourn the loss of all of the victims; and,

WHEREAS, the sisters of the Lambda Psi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. hosted a candlelight vigil to honor the victims of the mass murder, at which University of Florida President W. Kent Fuchs and Vice President for Student Affairs General Dave Kratzer offered words of encouragement for opposing racism and hatred; and,

\(^1\) http://www.emanuelamechurch.org
\(^2\) http://abcnews.go.com/US/charleston-shooting-victims-identified/story?id=31863489
\(^4\) http://lastrhodesian.com/data/documents/rtf88.txt
WHEREAS, the University of Florida Non-discrimination policy continues to oppose crimes motivated by race or other forms of hatred through initiatives such as Stop Bias, the efforts of the Department of Multicultural and Diversity Affairs, the Presidential Council on Diversity, and various student organizations on campus; and,

WHEREAS, University of Florida Student Body Resolution 1968-118 stated, “Disadvantaged peoples all across the nation have been seeking social reforms to abolish built-in discrimination, and since the state of Florida has a minority group of disadvantaged peoples who are joined together in a common voice to denounce traditional discrimination”6; and,

WHEREAS, University of Florida Student Body Resolution 1968-104 reads, “The role of a University must be one of leadership in providing vital solutions to important social problems,” including that of racial discrimination at the state and national level; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida Student Body Constitution prohibits discrimination “on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information, veteran status or any other classification as provided by law”8; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate honors the Emanuel Nine and sends its condolences to the grieving families of those lives lost due to racial hatred; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate encourages the University of Florida in continuing and expanding anti-discrimination and anti-racism policies to ensure that students, faculty, and staff are in an atmosphere conducive to the success of all Gators and citizens across these United States of America.

Proviso: Copy to be sent to the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Multicultural and Diversity Affairs, University of Florida President W. Kent Fuchs, Vice President of Student Affairs General Dave Kratzer, Dean of Students Dr. Jen Day Shaw, Institute of Black Culture Director Vee Smith.

---

5 http://www.umatter.ufl.edu
6 Id. Student Body Resolution 68-118
7 Id. Student Body Resolution 68-104