

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
COUNTY OF ESSEX

34

RESOLUTION NO. _____
PROPOSED BY: FREEHOLDER COOPER
SUBJECT:

AUTHORITY FOR RESOLUTION N.J.S.A. 40:41A-38(q)
AUTHORITY FOR ACTION C.C.E 2-29 (B)

IN MEMORIAM

THE HONORABLE THOMAS H. COOKE, JR.

WHEREAS, the Honorable Thomas H. Cooke, Jr., of East Orange, New Jersey, is being remembered upon his passing from this life on Monday, May 18, 2020, at the age of 90 of complications from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Thomas H. Cooke, Jr., was born on October 13, 1929, and spent his early years in rural Bishopville, South Carolina. His parents, Thomas Sr., and Julia Cooke, moved with him and his siblings to Baltimore's Bruce Court in search of a better life. He followed a path set by his older brothers and served in the military as a sailor; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Thomas H. Cooke, Jr., then, like his older sisters, earned college degrees after attending Morgan State in Baltimore and New York University. During those years, he met and married Audrey Wilson and the couple raised three children; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Thomas H. Cooke, Jr's., professional career began as an educator in the Newark public school system and included elected terms and leadership positions on the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders where he was elected in 1970 and re-elected in 1973; and East Orange City Council where he was elected in 1961 at the age of 32, and re-elected in 1969, he represented the 4th Ward. He was also a member of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, and National Council of Black Mayors. He was the second African-American elected to lead East Orange as Mayor from 1978 to 1985. He was the first African American Council Chairman; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his fight against slumlords, the Honorable Thomas H. Cooke, Jr., worked to stabilize taxes. He collaborated with housing advocates and tenant leaders as he recruited businesses willing to invest in the bedroom community. His administration presided over the construction of housing for seniors and the public auction of foreclosed properties. After leaving public office, he worked as a charter school administrator in Jersey City; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Thomas H. Cooke, Jr., was preceded in death by his wife Audrey in 1995 and daughter Bonita in 2007. He is survived by his daughter Julia; son Thomas, III; sister Anne Wilson Johnson; brother Wilbur; and dozens of grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews; as well as other extended family, colleagues, and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders hereby celebrates the life and mourns the passing of the Honorable Thomas H. Cooke, Jr., and offers their heartfelt condolences to his family; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of the Honorable Thomas H. Cooke, Jr.

Approved as to form and legality _____

Michael J. P... ..
Freeholder Counsel

RECORD OF VOTE (X=Vote N.V.=Abstention ABS=Absent)

Moved by Freeholder _____
Second by Freeholder _____

Freeholder	Yes	No	N.V.	ABS	Freeholder	Yes	No	N.V.	ABS
COOPER					POMARES				
GRAHAM					RICHARDSON, V.P.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
JOHNSON					SEBOLD				
LUCIANO									
MERCADO					GILL, PRES.				

It is hereby certified that the foregoing Resolution was () adopted () defeated () tabled by roll call vote at a _____ meeting of the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Essex, New Jersey held on _____

Is Publication Required () Yes () No

Date Published _____

Brendan W. Gill, President