

# Resolution No. 874-2023

By Council Member Conwell

## AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

Urging the Board of Trustees of Cleveland State University College of Law to consider renaming the law school after African-American lawyer Charles Hamilton Houston.

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WHEREAS, Charles Hamilton Houston was the dean of Howard University Law School and was first special counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Houston believed that the law could be used to fight racial discrimination and encouraged his students to work for such social purpose; and

WHEREAS, Houston graduated from Amherst College and Harvard Law School, and played a significant role in dismantling Jim Crow laws; and

WHEREAS, from 1929-1935, during his time as dean of Howard University Law School, Houston influenced nearly one-quarter of all the black lawyers in the United States, including former student Thurgood Marshall, who became a United States Supreme Court justice; and

WHEREAS, serving as the first special counsel for the NAACP between 1935-1940, Houston created litigation strategies to attack racial housing covenants and segregated schools, arguing several important civil rights cases before the U.S. Supreme Court; through his work at the NAACP, Houston played a role in nearly every civil rights case that reached the US Supreme Court between 1930 and *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954; and

WHEREAS, this Council believes that Houston's significant civil rights work as a lawyer and his mentorship of a generation of black attorneys supports the recommendation to the Board of Trustees to consider renaming Cleveland State University College of Law to Charles Hamilton Houston School of Law; and

WHEREAS, this resolution constitutes an emergency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, property, health or safety, now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND:

Section 1. That this Council urges the Board of Trustees of Cleveland State University College of Law to consider renaming the law school after African-American lawyer Charles Hamilton Houston.

Section 2. That the Clerk is directed to send copies of this resolution to the members of the Board of Trustees of Cleveland State University College of Law.

Section 3. That this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

KC:rns  
8/16/2023

