

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Vernon Dahmer was born on March 10, 1908, in the Kelly Settlement, Forrest County, Mississippi, to Ellen Louvenia (Kelly) and George Washington Dahmer; and

WHEREAS, the Dahmer family home, which was part of the Kelly Settlement named after Mr. Dahmer's maternal grandfather, was located north of Forrest County, close to the Jones County border; and

WHEREAS, in March of 1952, Mr. Dahmer married Ellie Jewel Davis, who was a teacher from Rose Hill, Mississippi, and had recently moved to Forrest County; and

WHEREAS, Vernon and Ellie had two children, and he had six other children from two previous marriages. Six of his seven sons served in the armed services of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dahmer was a member of Shady Grove Baptist Church where he served as a music director and Sunday school teacher. He was the owner of a grocery store, sawmill, planing mill and cotton farm; and

WHEREAS, in the 1950s, Vernon Dahmer and Medgar Evers founded a youth National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. During the Civil Rights Movement, Mr. Dahmer served two terms as president of the Forrest County Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and led voter registration drives in the 1960s. As President of the Forrest County Chapter of the NAACP, Vernon involved the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to aid the voter registration efforts being made by African Americans in Hattiesburg, Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dahmer kept a voter registration book in his grocery store in late 1965 to make it easier for African Americans to register. His mantra was, "If you don't vote, you don't count," and those words, which he repeated on his deathbed, were used as his epitaph; and

WHEREAS, on January 10, 1966, the Dahmer home was attacked and set on fire by members of the Ku Klux Klan. He died defending his family, due to his lungs being severely burned and smoke inhalation; and

WHEREAS, the Chamber of Commerce under William Carey, College President, Dr. Ralph Noonkester and Bob Beech, led a community effort to rebuild the Dahmer home. Local and state businesses donated materials and services, and students from the University of Southern Mississippi volunteered labor; and

WHEREAS, since Mr. Dahmer's death, his family has remained dedicated to voting rights, and his widow, Ellie Dahmer, served unopposed on the Election Commission for twelve years:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Phil Bryant, Governor of the State of Mississippi, hereby proclaim January 10, 2016, as

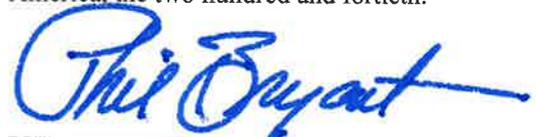
Vernon Dahmer Sr. Day

in the State of Mississippi.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Jackson, on the 7th day January in the year of our Lord, two thousand and sixteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and fortieth.



PHIL BRYANT
GOVERNOR