

RESOLUTION  
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
MARIN COUNTY

COMMENDING  
**KERRY PEIRSON**  
FOR HIS LIFETIME COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

**WHEREAS**, born in Oakland, and raised in Berkeley, Kerry Peirson matriculated at Contra Costa Community College and the University of California, Berkeley, and then ventured East, earning his degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C.; and

**WHEREAS**, a “left” coaster through and through, Kerry gravitated back to California, somewhere along the way departing for a tour of duty in Vietnam as a medic, and eventually settling in Marin in 1982. He made Mill Valley his chosen home and 38-year “theater of operations” for the pursuit of justice, making a career advocating for righteous, long-sought, hard-won causes; and

**WHEREAS**, a devoted student of history, Kerry’s family includes heroism in historic measure. Retired Captain Gwynne Peirson, Kerry’s father, was a distinguished Tuskegee Airman, one of the elite fighter pilots in World War II, only belatedly acknowledged by our nation for bravery and love of country. Captain Peirson’s flying acumen, shown attacking a Japanese destroyer, was featured footage in the award-winning HBO film, *The Tuskegee Airman*; and

**WHEREAS**, Kerry Peirson was the first African American Aide serving Southern Marin Supervisor Annette Rose for a short time in 1993 in her first term. Being an outspoken advocate with a long list of issues to pursue, Kerry knew his calling was elsewhere and departed the Civic Center for the abundant, free range advocacy opportunities calling to him in the wider community; and

**WHEREAS**, scanning the civic and community landscape of Marin, Kerry saw opportunities for public service everywhere, volunteering on local city and county boards and commissions, often as Chair, and serving on nonprofit community boards, including the ACLU Marin Chapter, Legal Aid of Marin, Mill Valley Parks and Recreation Commission, Marin County Human Rights Commission (twice as Chair), and the County’s Affirmative Action Advisory Committee. Kerry helped co-found the Phoenix Project in Marin City and the Marin Action Coalition for Equity (ACE). In recognition of his commitment to Marin, Kerry received the Beryl Buck Award for community service in 1999; and

**WHEREAS**, Kerry led the movement to focus the largess of the Beryl Buck Trust to serve Marin’s poor and needy. His perseverance in pursuing that goal led to his service on the Marin Community Foundation Board of Trustees as the “Representative of the Poor and Needy,” a specially designated and much sought-after seat, appointed by the Marin County Supervisors; and

**WHEREAS**, like Representative John Lewis, Kerry revels in making “good trouble” whenever and wherever called for. Prevailing against injustice and wrongs often requires patience and strategy. In the early 1990’s, Kerry led the campaign to remove the black jockey statues from Main Street in Tiburon. Keeping his eye on the prize, Kerry kept up a steadfast and determined 22-year crusade to rename the Dixie School District in San Rafael, which, with the help of loyal supporters near and far, ultimately prevailed. Kerry knows how to take the long view; and

**WHEREAS**, Kerry, gifted with wit, wisdom and laser sharp barbs, enjoys writing hard-hitting, no holds barred opinion pieces and letters to the editor and is a frequent jousting taking on whomever he determines to be on the wrong side of an issue. No one is beyond his reach, including the Marin Independent Journal editorial board, editors, opinion writers, local residents, well-known political commentators, columnists, gadflies, elected representatives, and even County Supervisors; and

**WHEREAS**, with Kerry, family comes first and always. His pride and joy are his daughter, Amber Allen-Peirson, son, Kali Peirson, and grandson, Cordell Coleman. At the mention of family, Kerry's piercing blue-grey eyes light up and twinkle. His legacy is strong family and inspired friends, always ready, with his guidance and prodding, to stand up for others advocating for inclusion, acceptance, and mutual respect. Family and friends joining with him in the fight for justice have been Kerry's greatest and most constant companions; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin hereby thanks and commends Kerry Peirson for devoting himself to the hard, often thankless work of holding up a mirror to the Marin community so that we could better see who we are and choose a different, often harder and better path forward to becoming the more just and equitable society we aspire to be.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** at a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin held this 17th day of November 2020.

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*KATIE RICE – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 2- PRESIDENT*

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*DAMON CONNOLLY – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 1*

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*KATHRIN SEARS – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 3*

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*DENNIS RODONI – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 4*

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*JUDY ARNOLD – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 5*

