

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the City Commission

From: Lisa Agnor, City Manager

Date: April 8, 2016

Subject: Proclamation declaring April 24-30, 2016 as "James Farmer Week"
in Marshall, Texas

This item has been placed on the agenda at the request of Commissioner Boersma. A copy of the proclamation is attached.

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS James Farmer, Jr. was born on January 12, 1920, in Marshall, Texas, the son of James, Sr. and Pearl Farmer. James Farmer, Sr., an educator at Wiley College, was also the first African-American to earn a doctorate in the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS James attended Marshall's Central High School, and graduated with honors at the age of 14; and

WHEREAS While a student at Wiley College, he became one of Professor Melvin Tolson's "Great Debaters"; and

WHEREAS Climbing the back stairs and sitting in the 'buzzard's roost' at Paramount Theatre in Marshall caused James Farmer, Jr. to commit to eliminating segregation in the United States; and

WHEREAS In 1941, he helped to found the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and organized 'sit-ins' in an attempt to desegregate the Jack Spratt Restaurant in Chicago, Illinois; and

WHEREAS Mr. Farmer began the historic 'Freedom Rides' effort in 1961, challenging segregation in bus terminals throughout the South; and

WHEREAS The non-violent efforts of James Farmer, Jr., one of the "Big Four" great leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and

WHEREAS The 1965 murders in Mississippi of CORE members Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner, led to the passage of the Civil Rights Bill of 1965; and

WHEREAS James Farmer, Jr. devoted his life to ending racism in the United States; and

WHEREAS The City of Marshall, in 1995, named a street in honor of James Farmer, Jr., and his father, James Farmer, Sr.; and

WHEREAS In 1998, James Farmer, Jr. was the recipient of the nation's highest honor, The Presidential Medal of Freedom.

NOW, THEREFORE we, the City Commission of Marshall, Texas do hereby proclaim that the week of April 24 – 30, 2016 be observed as "*James Farmer, Jr. Week*" in Marshall, Texas.

Eric Neal, Mayor
City of Marshall, Texas