**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**H. 4096**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

House Resolution

Sponsors: Reps. McDaniel, Alexander, Anderson, Bamberg, Bauer, Clyburn, Dillard, Garvin, Gilliard, Govan, Grant, Hart, Henderson-Myers, Hosey, Howard, J.L. Johnson, Jones, Luck, King, J. Moore, Reese, Rivers, Rutherford, Spann-Wilder, Weeks and Williams

Document Path: LC-0191VR-VR25.docx

Introduced in the House on February 26, 2025

Adopted by the House on February 26, 2025

Summary: Cecil Williams

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 2/26/2025 House Introduced and adopted (House Journal‑page 11)

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[02/26/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/4096_20250226.docx)

A house RESOLUTION

TO HONOR THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PHOTOGRAPHER CECIL J. WILLIAMS OF ORANGEBURG COUNTY FOR CAPTURING THE IMAGES OF SOUTH CAROLINIANS WHO WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND FOR PRESERVING THAT HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Whereas, the House of Representatives is honored to recognize Cecil J. Williams of Orangeburg County who, through his photography, has paid tribute to the many heroes of South Carolina’s Civil Rights Movement. Born in 1937, Cecil Williams discovered his passion as a nine‑year‑old boy when his older brother, Al, gave him a hand‑me‑down camera, a Kodak Baby Brownie; and

Whereas, shortly thereafter, the family bathtub was serving as the developing tank for his photographs, and by the age of twelve, he was earning money as a wedding photographer. “Born smart,” as his cousin Maudelle put it, he soon pivoted and embarked on a career of showcasing the Civil Rights Movement as it unfolded in the Palmetto State, his work first appearing in Jet Magazine, the Pittsburgh Courier, the Baltimore Afro American, and other Black publications, and later in national news outlets; and

Whereas, years before the landmark U.S. Supreme Court Brown v. Board of Education decision that ended public school segregation, a young Cecil Williams was chronicling the courage of Clarendon County area residents who wanted their children to have the same educational resources as any other child in the State, including with images of Reverend J.A. DeLaine, Levi Pearson, and Eliza and Harry Briggs, among others. Later, he would photograph Thurgood Marshall, attorney for the plaintiffs, on numerous occasions, before and after the Supreme Court decision; and

Whereas, even before social changes were ushered in, he captured the images of civil rights pioneers whose efforts set the stage for integration, such as the picture of Raymond Weston and Lloyd Williams on the steps of the University of South Carolina’s main administrative building just after being turned away for applying for admission. Later, he would photograph Henrie Monteith, one of the first three African Americans to be admitted to USC in 1963, the first time since Reconstruction; and

Whereas, always bearing witness to the courageous, extraordinary acts of ordinary individuals, Cecil Williams has painted a vibrant portrait through his photographs of those who spoke truth to power by advocating for their civil rights, including images of the “selective buying” campaign by SC State and Claflin students to boycott merchants who opposed school integration (1956); the Elloree 21 teachers who sacrificed their livelihoods for the right to be members of the NAACP (1956); the students behind the fence at the Orangeburg county jail after their arrest for marching and demonstrating (1960); the student lunch counter sit‑ins of the 1960s; the attempted integration of an Orangeburg bowling alley that ended in violence and the killing of three students by law enforcement (1968); and the Charleston hospital strike where more than sixty African American healthcare workers walked off the job to protest discriminatory employment practices (1969); and

Whereas, by being present and recording history, Cecil Williams has ensured that the contributions of fellow South Carolinians to the Civil Rights Movement are not lost to history. Through his camera lenses, their stories have been told. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, honor the contributions of photographer Cecil J. Williams of Orangeburg County for capturing the images of South Carolinians who were instrumental in the Civil Rights Movement and for preserving that history for future generations.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Cecil J. Williams.

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