

Honoring

David Harper

WHEREAS, The Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees strives to honor those providing distinguished service to our students, colleges, and the community, and wishes to honor David Harper; and

WHEREAS, David Harper began his adult life studying for the priesthood in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, served with the United States military during the Korean War and later excelled at college in Arizona earning a degree in accounting; and

WHEREAS, David Harper moved his family to Oakland when the Bank of America hired him as its first African American lending officer at its San Francisco headquarters, thereby making Harper the first of his race hired in that capacity by a major commercial bank in the United States; and

WHEREAS, David Harper, while a rising star as a bank executive, taught an introductory business class at Laney College in the Peralta Community College District system, and also taught a class in organizational management at Golden Gate University and an accounting course at Chabot College; and

WHEREAS, A "jury of one's peers" guaranteed criminal defendants by our Constitution historically consisted of white men and David Harper was the only African American chosen for the ground-breaking 1968 Huey Newton death penalty jury of seven women and five men; and

WHEREAS, That Oakland jury chose David Harper as their foreman--the first known African American foreman in a major criminal trial in America, and he used his leadership skills to bring the jury to consensus on the evidence, demonstrating both courage and commitment to justice under extraordinary pressure in that internationally-watched trial; and

WHEREAS, 1968 was a year of racial turmoil in cities across America with major civil unrest threatened if Newton did not receive a fair trial and no such unrest occurred following the unanimous jury verdict; and

WHEREAS, David Harper left Oakland for Detroit, Michigan a year after the Newton trial to help with its recovery from devastating 1967 riots, and the City of Detroit named a day in his honor, among other recognition for his dedication to the community and later, upon moving to St. Louis, Missouri, David Harper received many other civic awards for his extensive public service; and

WHEREAS, The issue of racial exclusion from death penalty juries has just returned to the United States Supreme Court's docket in a case involving an all-white Georgia jury and systematic exclusion of black citizens has been documented as a persistent problem in other states while studies have shown that inter-racial juries make fewer mistakes, spend more time deliberating and view the evidence presented to them from more perspectives than all-white juries; and

WHEREAS, David Harper has been a role model throughout his life and served with extraordinary distinction as foreman of one of the most politicized criminal cases of the 20th century, and the Peralta Community College District is proud of its national leadership in valuing diversity and inclusion.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

*that the Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees
honors*

David Harper

*for his exemplary service to the community and his many
outstanding accomplishments.*

Hon. Meredith E. Brown
President
Board of Trustees
Peralta Community College District