



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 21-215, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 3/17/2021

TITLE:

Historic Highway Marker Recognizing the Swanson Case

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Approval of Jefferson Madison Regional Library (JMRL) application for a historic highway marker recognizing the Swanson Case

ITEM TYPE: Consent Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Kamptner, Russell

PRESENTER (S): N/A

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) historical highway marker program documents facts, persons, events, and places prominently identified with the history of the nation, state, or region. The Jefferson Madison Regional Library (JMRL) is moving forward with an application for a historic marker at the Central Branch of the library, which requires a signature from the building owner.

The Central Branch location is co-owned by the City of Charlottesville and the County of Albemarle.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Educational Opportunities - Provide lifelong learning opportunities for all our citizens.

DISCUSSION: The proposed historic marker will educate the public on the legal case of Gregory Swanson v. the University of the Virginia. The text submitted to DHR for review will read:

In 1950, Gregory Swanson, a lawyer from Danville, became the first Black man to study at UVA. Established in 1819 for whites only, UVA rejected Swanson's application to the graduate legal program because he was Black. Swanson filed suit with the support of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. On 5 Sep. 1950, the case was heard in the Charlottesville federal court. After 30 minutes of deliberation, a three-judge panel ruled Swanson's 14th Amendment rights had been violated and that UVA must allow Swanson to enroll. He registered for classes ten days later. In 2020, Jefferson Madison Regional Library renamed the former courtroom as the Swanson Case Room to recognize Swanson's role in desegregating Virginia's public colleges and UVA grounds.

BUDGET IMPACT: The \$1,945 cost of the marker will be paid by JMRL. There is no expected cost to the County.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board approve JMRL's submission of the application for placement of the Swanson v. UVA historic marker (Attachment A).

ATTACHMENTS:

A - JMRL Application to Propose Placement of a New Virginia Historical Highway Marker