Wayne County Commission pauses to honor memory of late Congressman John Conyers

Wayne County Commissioners today joined with elected officials throughout the nation in paying tribute to the late former Congressman John Conyers Jr. (D-Detroit), remembering him as a “Civil Rights icon.”

Conyers, who served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1965-2017, was the longest-serving African American member of Congress in history. He passed away Oct. 27 at age 90.

He “was known and highly respected for his advocacy of racial justice and for such progressive causes as single-payer health care and handgun control,” commissioners said in a memorial tribute to the late Congressman. Commissioners also paused for a moment of silence in his memory.

Memorial services were held Monday in Detroit, with former President Bill Clinton and music legend Stevie Wonder among the speakers.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has ordered flags on government buildings to remain at half-staff through Nov. 10.

A copy of the resolution follows:
Resolution:

WHEREAS, It is with great respect and admiration that we, the members of the Wayne County Commission, solemnly pause and reflect on the life of an outstanding American leader, former Congressman JOHN CONYERS JR., who passed away October 27, 2019, at age 90; and

WHEREAS, JOHN CONYERS JR. was born May 16, 1929, in Detroit, Michigan, and before entering Congress, worked in an auto plant, served as an officer in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and earned a law degree from Wayne State University upon returning from service; and

WHEREAS, A Democrat, JOHN CONYERS JR. was first elected to the U.S. Congress in 1964 and would represent his Wayne County-based district until 2017, becoming the longest serving African American in Congress in U.S. history and commonly referred to as the “Dean”; and

WHEREAS, JOHN CONYERS JR. was founder of the Congressional Black Caucus and was known and highly respected for his advocacy of racial justice and for such progressive causes as single-payer health care and handgun control. He also worked with legislators from both parties to assure that all congressional districts were equivalent in terms of population; and

WHEREAS, JOHN CONYERS JR. was among the first African Americans to chair a Congressional committee, having led the powerful Government Operations Committee in the 1980s and, later, the House Judiciary Committee. He championed passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, which was landmark federal legislation prohibiting racial discrimination in voting, and was inducted into the Civil Rights Hall of Fame in 2005; and

WHEREAS, Well known for his sartorial style and his lifelong love of jazz music, having hosted a radio program that featured jazz music while serving in Congress, JOHN CONYERS JR. was a Civil Rights icon and advocate for the creation of a federal holiday to honor Rev.
Martin Luther King Jr. which became law in 1983, and an outspoken critic of the Vietnam War, Iraq War and creation of the modern surveillance state; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this resolution endure as a lasting record of Wayne County’s respect for the remarkable life lived so graciously by JOHN CONYERS JR. with deep appreciation for his lifelong accomplishments in making this county, this nation and the world a better place for all to enjoy.