

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 321

WHEREAS, Senator Ronald Rice was a dedicated public servant who was the longest-serving Black legislator in New Jersey history; and

WHEREAS, Senator Rice was born in Richmond, Virginia during the Jim Crow-era South, and first moved to Newark when he was nine years old; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Newark's South Side High School in 1964, Senator Rice attended Howard University before enlisting to serve in the United States Marine Corps in 1966; and

WHEREAS, Senator Rice was stationed at the United States military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba before serving as a soldier in Vietnam, where he rose to the rank of Sergeant; and

WHEREAS, after returning home at the age of 24, Senator Rice successfully fought to change the vision requirements so that he could become a police officer for the Newark Police Department; and

WHEREAS, while working for the Police Department, Senator Rice earned an Associate's degree in police science from Essex County College, a Bachelor's degree from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and a Master's degree in criminal justice from Rutgers-Newark; and

WHEREAS, Senator Rice was elected as a councilmember on the Newark City Council in 1982 and was first elected to serve as the Senator from New Jersey's 28th Legislative District in 1986; and

WHEREAS, Senator Rice was re-elected 11 times, and went on to serve in the New Jersey Senate for nearly 36 years before retiring in August 2022; and

WHEREAS, Senator Rice served as Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus for 18 years; and

WHEREAS, Senator Rice was a courageous and fierce advocate, not just for his constituents, but also for underrepresented and underserved communities throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, throughout his time in the legislature, Senator Rice shined a light on racial inequities and refused to shy away from tough issues; and

WHEREAS, Senator Rice was a man of principle who led with integrity, compassion, and a commitment to the greater good; and

WHEREAS, Senator Rice passed away on March 15, 2023 after succumbing to a long illness; and

WHEREAS, Senator Rice was a beloved husband and father, who leaves behind his children, Ronald and Yuki; and

WHEREAS, it is with immense sadness that we mourn Senator Rice's passing, and extend our deepest sympathy to his family, friends, and colleagues; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to honor the cherished memory and exemplary career and achievements of Senator Rice;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, PHILIP D. MURPHY, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. The flag of the United States of America and the flag of New Jersey shall be flown at half-staff at all State departments, offices, agencies, and instrumentalities during appropriate hours from Thursday, March 16, 2023 through Thursday, March 23, 2023 in recognition and mourning of Senator Ronald Rice.

2. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this
16th day of March,
Two Thousand and Twenty-Three,
and of the Independence of the
United States, the Two Hundred
and Forty-Seventh.

[seal]

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Parimal Garg

Chief Counsel to the Governor