

**RESOLUTION**  
**R178-08/09**

**WHEREAS**, J.L. Chestnut, Jr. was born in Selma, Alabama to Geraldine Phillip Chestnut and J. L. Chestnut, Sr. on December 16, 1930 and departed his life on September 30, 2008; and

**WHEREAS**, J.L. Chestnut, Jr. a native of Selma, Alabama, graduated from Knox Academy in 1948, Dillard University in 1953 and Howard University Law School in 1958 and returned to Selma in 1958 to become a key legal figure in securing voting rights and civil rights for African Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, J.L. Chestnut, Jr., with only nine black lawyers in the State of Alabama, became the first black lawyer in Selma, Alabama when he opened his law office in 1959; and

**WHEREAS**, J.L. Chestnut, Jr. merged his law practice with Rose M. Sanders and Hank Sanders to become one of the largest black law firms in the State of Alabama and one of the ten largest firms in the country at one time; and

**WHEREAS**, for over 20 years, the law office of Chestnut, Sanders, Sanders and Pettaway LLC was located on Jeff Davis Avenue in Selma Alabama and has represented and defended individuals from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to over 20,000 poor farmers in a class action lawsuit against the United States Department of Agriculture resulting in more than 1 billion dollars being paid to poor black farmers; and

**WHEREAS**, J.L. Chestnut Jr. was a member of the first Baptist Church located on Jeff Davis Avenue where many meetings of Selma's Voting Rights movement were held and served also as the chairman of the Board of Deacons; and

**WHEREAS**, J.L. Chestnut, Jr., a writer, public speaker and communicator, obtained a license from the Federal Communications Commission to operate Selma's first FM radio station for black audiences on Jeff Davis Avenue and further hosted the widely popular well known talk program known as "Public Conversation"; and

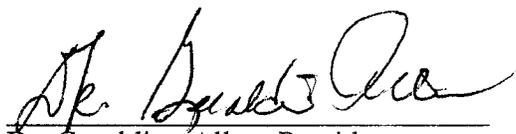
**WHEREAS**, the Selma City Council recognizes the countless attributes of J.L. Chestnut Jr. as an advocate for all people including but not limited to his representation of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Selma Movement which, along with other voting rights struggles, led to Bloody Sunday, the Selma to Montgomery March and passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965; and

**WHEREAS**, the Selma City Council desires to recognize the attributes of J.L. Chestnut, Jr. and all of his works in the City of Selma Alabama by renaming the entire street of Jeff Davis Avenue to J.L. Chestnut Jr. Boulevard.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SELMA, ALABAMA**, that the City Council of the City of Selma, Alabama, on this thirteenth day of January, 2009, hereby renames Jeff Davis Avenue in its entirety to J.L. Chestnut Jr. Boulevard.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Mayor of the City of Selma or his designee is hereby directed to proceed with implementing the council's decision in renaming the street and is further directed to notify all owners, who has a physical address of Jeff Davis Avenue, of the name change from Jeff Davis Avenue to J.L. Chestnut Jr. Boulevard.

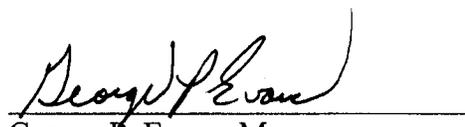
**ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SELMA, ALABAMA**, on this the 13th day of January, 2009.

  
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Dr. Geraldine Allen, President

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lois Williams, City Clerk

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
George P. Evans, Mayor