

## SPEECH DURING 1969 SCHOOL BOARD CAMPAIGN

JAMES L. SOLOMON, JR.

*In 1969, James Solomon ran in the school board election for Sumter District 17. At this time, no African American had been elected to county public office since Reconstruction.*

*This undated text is directed to "My fellow citizens of Sumter School District #17" and encourages Sumter African Americans to vote for him. Solomon lost this election, but he ran successfully the next year, becoming the first African American elected to Sumter public office in Sumter since Reconstruction.*

I have long been disturbed by the fact that in matters of real importance, the Negroes of Sumter are treated as invisible entities. The truth of the matter is we are not consulted, or advised, by the decision makers of impended programs or policies which involve our lives and the lives of our children. We can no longer permit this kind of situation to exist.

We are an integral part of this community. We have an interest in the welfare, the programs and the problems of this community. Therefore, we must have a voice in decisions which determine the welfare and its progress.

Having a real voice in school matters is a necessary first step in this direction.

With this in mind I sincerely request your support and your vote for my candidacy for a seat on the District # 17 school board.

We need your vote, your goodwill and your support in getting others to vote, if we are to be elected.

The polls will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on June 17, 1969. Please vote.

Please encourage others to vote. The educational welfare of our children is at stake, we dare not let them down.

**Acknowledgements.** This text is based on an original document in the James L. Solomon holdings of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.