

SPEECH DURING 1970 SCHOOL BOARD CAMPAIGN

JAMES L. SOLOMON, JR.

After his defeat in the 1969 school board election for Sumter District 17, James Solomon ran again the next year.

This text, dated June 7, 1970 and titled "TO THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF [blank] Church", encourages Sumter African Americans to vote for him. Solomon won the election, becoming the first African American elected to public office in Sumter since Reconstruction.

As a citizen of Sumter I am proud of the accomplishments which have been made towards improved educational opportunities for all our children.

I realize, however, that the conditions of our times seriously challenge these accomplishments and dictate additional, more far reaching changes, which must be considered if Sumter schools are to continue to progress.

I wish to make it implicitly clear that, I feel that any endeavor, program or activity which involves the Sumter community, whether it be designed to meet an impending situation or perpetuate meaningful change, must involve the thinking and deliberation of the Black component of the Sumter community.

I feel that this is especially true with respect to the public school situation. I shall therefore, seek a seat on the Sumter District # 17 School Board in the upcoming School Board Election on June 16, 1970.

I solicit your prayers, your help, and your vote in this endeavor. Please contact everyone in your neighborhood and tell them about this important election. Tell them that you must vote in the school board election on June 16, 1970 and please tell them to vote for James L. Solomon.

I pledge that if given the opportunity to serve you as member of the Sumter School Board I will do all within my power to represent your interest and the interest of our children.

It is important to vote in the Primary, BUT it is absolutely essential that every Black registered voter vote in the School Board election on Tuesday, June 16, 1970. It may be later than we think.

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.