

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 980  
By DeBerry J

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Gedeon McKinney upon his selection as a 2006 *American Idol* finalist.

WHEREAS, Tennessee is rich in a musical tradition which ranges from the bluegrass music of the Appalachian Mountains to country music, with its home in Nashville, to world-renowned jazz and blues music originating in Memphis, the birthplace of rock and roll; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to honor those artists who, through their extraordinary talents, have brought and continue to bring great renown to the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Gedeon McKinney, a charismatic and passionate musician, who was selected from more than 97,000 contestants to be one of twenty-four finalists to appear on the 2006 *American Idol* television show, one of the highest-rated programs in the world; and

WHEREAS, seventeen-year-old Gedeon McKinney hails from Memphis and is the son of Mrs. Maria McKinney and the late Anthony "Tony" McKinney, a noted blues singer, musician, and writer; and

WHEREAS, by the age of five Gedeon McKinney's talent was evident; when told he was too young to sing in the church choir, he moved outside and sang to the world from the church steps; and

WHEREAS, as a student in Memphis City Schools, young Mr. McKinney excelled in his musical endeavors, winning talent shows and performing in school choirs; he joined the acclaimed Yo! Memphis show choir at age 14, quickly earning a position as soloist, and was chosen as the lead vocalist of Serenity, the Yo! Memphis soul group; a gifted actor, writer, and musician, he is an artist blessed with a broad spectrum of talent, and his rousing performances have received recognition across the nation; and

WHEREAS, Gedeon McKinney entered the Yo! Academy of Visual and Performing Arts as a high school junior and is valedictorian of the Class of 2006, a teaching assistant in the music theory class, head set designer, and vocal music and drama coach; no stranger to accolades, he has consistently been awarded certificates for perfect attendance and has received the Phoenix Award, the highest honor in the school; he also received an Academy Scholarship to attend musical theatre camp at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) during the summer of 2005; and

WHEREAS, Mr. McKinney traveled with his mother to Chicago for the *American Idol* auditions, and was chosen by the judges to appear as a contestant on the 2006 show, *American Idol 5*; he was subsequently selected by American voters as number 13 in *Idol* placement, and briefly led in the *American Idol* polls as the contestant Americans most wanted to see return to the competition; and

WHEREAS, his vocal talent and impressive performing resumé aside, Gedeon McKinney is most grateful for the love and support of his close-knit and talented family; his sisters, Anna and Evvie, and brother, Emmanuel, a student at the University of Tennessee, are all accomplished singers; another sister Pricilla is an aspiring model; his brother Esaias, is an all-around athlete, and his oldest brother, Anthony, Jr., is a hair stylist; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we honor the celebrated achievements of Gedeon McKinney, reflecting fondly on his warm and wonderful character and his visionary artistic leadership; he epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Gedeon McKinney upon his selection as a 2006 *American Idol* finalist. For his commitment to excellence and all of his incomparable gifts, we extend to Gedeon McKinney our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.