

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1052

By Sontany

A RESOLUTION to recognize the Grassmere Historic Home on the occasion of its 200th anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those historic homes that reflect the panoramic history of the great State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the Grassmere Historic Home was built by Colonel Michael C. Dunn and was completed in 1810, making it the second-oldest residence in Davidson County that is open to the public; and

WHEREAS, the home was renovated after the Civil War, and the style changed from Federal to Italianate, and porches were added between 1876 and 1881; also added at this time were the smokehouse, kitchen, and three-tiered garden; and

WHEREAS, the last tenants, sisters Margaret and Elsie Croft, born in 1889 and 1894, respectively, understood that the value of their land and family home to the community was truly incalculable and entered into a special agreement with the Children's Museum of Nashville (now the Adventure Science Center) in 1964; and

WHEREAS, the agreement stated the museum would pay property taxes and assist with the upkeep of the home while the sisters lived the remainder of their lives at Grassmere and that, after their deaths, the museum would become owners of the property and buildings, with one stipulation – that their property would be maintained as a "nature study center," preserved to educate Nashvillians about animals and the environment; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, the museum opened Grassmere Wildlife Park, displaying primarily North American animals, offering educational programs, and providing nature trails for hiking; and

WHEREAS, the park was closed in 1995 for financial reasons, and the property became Metro property by default; the City of Nashville was bound by the will of the sisters to preserve the property as a nature center, and the Nashville Zoo was invited to relocate to the Grassmere site; and

WHEREAS, the Nashville Zoo began managing the Grassmere property in December 1996, and in 1998, the Zoo partnered with the Metro Historical Commission and the Metro Parks Department to restore the Croft's Home; and

WHEREAS, the Grassmere Historic Home opened to visitors for the first time in 1998; in 1999, the Grassmere Historic Farm opened, including a livestock barn, pastures, chicken coop, and machine shed; and

WHEREAS, the Nashville Zoo offers tours through the Grassmere Historic Home, giving guests a unique glimpse into life on a family farm in the 19th century; and

WHEREAS, the Grassmere Historic Home contains artifacts from the 19th century, of which 95% are original to the home; and

WHEREAS, the Nashville Zoo further enhanced the Grassmere Historic Home experience by offering a true farm atmosphere, including the original outbuildings, a barn, heritage breed animals, farming artifacts, a family cemetery, and a period vegetable garden; and

WHEREAS, the Davidson County Master Gardeners also enrich the Grassmere Historic Home experience by maintaining an orchard and the heirloom garden with vegetables, herbs, and flowers; and

WHEREAS, more than 600,000 people visit the Nashville Zoo annually, many of whom tour the Grassmere Historic Home and Farm; and

WHEREAS, the Nashville Zoo's commitment to being good stewards of the Grassmere Historic Home and property continues to honor Margaret and Elise Croft's vision; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize the Grassmere Historic Home upon the notable occasion of

its 200th anniversary, honoring the memory of Margaret and Elsie Croft for their foresight and dedication to ensuring their home remain an irreplaceable part of our State's history and heritage while commending all of those involved in its continued preservation and enjoyment as a valued landmark and unique feature of the Nashville Zoo.

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