

HOUSE RESOLUTION 32

By Gilmore

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Moses Walter Fisher, Jr. for his efforts in renaming Metro Center Boulevard and Eighth Avenue North in Nashville as Rosa L. Parks Boulevard.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those estimable individuals who, through their extraordinary efforts and vision, have distinguished themselves as leaders in recognizing and promoting the significance of the contributions made by civil rights icons; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding person is Moses Walter Fisher, Jr., who bravely answered the Lord's call and was instrumental in renaming a four-mile stretch of Eighth Avenue North and Metro Center Boulevard as Rosa L. Parks Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Fisher was making plans to visit his father in Detroit, Michigan, on his father's ninetieth birthday when he acted on a strong inclination to drive to Montgomery, Alabama, to view Mrs. Rosa Parks's remains in state; it was on this trip that Mr. Fisher became overwhelmed with immeasurable gratitude for all that Rosa Parks and other civil rights leaders had risked and achieved for the betterment of the lives of African-Americans; and

WHEREAS, Moses Fisher paid his respects to Rosa Parks a second time at her funeral in Detroit, Michigan, during a visit with his father; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Fisher devotedly stood in line for more than two hours and sat in The Greater Grace Temple for more than six hours at the historic funeral of Rosa Parks, where he observed people lined up for miles on both sides of the street to view the grand funeral procession on Seven Mile Road on Livernois, a procession consisting of helicopters, a spectacular number of City of Detroit police cars, African-American men dressed as cavalry

soldiers riding on black horses, and the Swanson Funeral Home's old style white funeral hearse that carried the remains of Rosa Parks; and

WHEREAS, it was a time of great reverence in remembering the past, giving thanks for the present, and looking forward to the future; and

WHEREAS, deeply moved and humbled by his witness of these events, Moses Fisher was reflecting on these recent experiences when he received from the Lord the idea to name a street in Nashville honoring Mrs. Parks; and

WHEREAS, spurred by this request from above, Mr. Fisher told State Senator Thelma Harper about this proposal to commemorate the memory of Rosa Parks; Senator Harper was immediately enthusiastic about the idea and encouraged Mr. Fisher to collect letters of support and to send them to her office; and

WHEREAS, after more counsel from God, it was eventually decided that the area of road where Metro Center Boulevard changes into Eighth Avenue North after crossing Interstate 65 would be the road that would bear Rosa L. Parks's illustrious name, due to the beautiful view that can be seen from this street; and

WHEREAS, the street name proposal quickly gained support, most notably from the Interdenominational Ministers' Fellowship (IMF); the Board of Directors of the Farmers' Market; eminent author and poet Nikki Giovanni; former President Bill Clinton; the Presidents of Tennessee State University, Meharry Medical College, Watkins College of Art and Design, and American Baptist Theological Seminary; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); pastors of churches not affiliated with the IMF; and State Representative Brenda Gilmore, who first supported the proposal when she was on the Metropolitan Nashville City Council and continued her support of it after she was elected to the Tennessee General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, Moses Fisher was also encouraged by the immeasurable efforts of Dr. Robert Keese, Presiding Elder for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Dr. Charles E. McGowan, President of The Operation Andrew Group, who campaigned alongside of Moses Fisher at Legislative Plaza and the Farmers' Market; and

WHEREAS, on June 11, 2007, Mr. Fisher's call from the Lord was realized when the Governor signed into law the bill renaming Metro Center Boulevard and Eighth Avenue North as Rosa L. Parks Boulevard; Mr. Fisher humbly credits God for everyone and everything coming together to support this proposal; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Rosa L. Parks is a cultural icon and a tribute to the spirit and culture of African-Americans who is most assuredly deserving of this esteemed recognition, and Mr. Moses Fisher is to be specially commended for his selfless efforts in preserving her indelible legacy; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby recognize and salute Mr. Moses Walter Fisher, Jr., for his visionary efforts in renaming four miles of one of this State's most prominent roads after Rosa L. Parks and extend to him our best wishes for continued success in his future endeavors.

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