

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 112

By Camper

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize the accomplishments and contributions of the Afro American Police Association.

WHEREAS it is fitting that members of this General Assembly should honor and commemorate those key organizations in our history that have advanced the ongoing struggle for civil and human rights and promoted racial equality in our State; and

WHEREAS, the Afro American Police Association (AAPA) is certainly one such historical campaign, established in 1973 to fight discrimination against minorities and women in the Memphis Police Department by seven courageous police officers; and

WHEREAS, believing that challenging racism would stimulate their great city toward the maturity of a truly just and equitable society, the founders included James Bolden, Clifton Dates, Charles Logan, Doug Nettles, Clyde Buford, Van Fields, and Curtis Mull; and

WHEREAS, dedicating their lives to the service of humanity through law enforcement, the founders established the ground work for the advancement of minorities in the Memphis Police Department; other members remembered for the accomplishment of their high purposes include the likes of David Dugger, Richard Seawood, Harolds Parker, William Young, Tom Marshall Jr., U.J. Toney, Robert Phifer, Johnny Currin, Coria Williams, Sam Williams, Elton Hyman, Dwight Woods, Jeff Higgins, Pauline Johnson, Angela Jenkins, Preston Morton, Gerald Perry, Gloria Crenshaw, Sandra Owens, and Leo Rosmon; and

WHEREAS, active in the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement as a whole, the AAPA in 1978 filed a federal lawsuit against the City of Memphis and entered into a Consent Decree compelling the City to employ a greater number of minorities and women on the Memphis Police Department; the effort also obligated the police department to conduct fair and impartial testing for adequate advancement on the job; and

WHEREAS, the AAPA additionally supported, organized, and financed federal lawsuits to secure promotions for thirty-three police officers discriminated against from flawed promotional tests; and

WHEREAS, in providing for the domestic tranquility of the Memphis community, this heroic police union has represented hundreds of officers during administrative and civil service hearings, increased the membership from eighty-nine members in 1995 to over 500 members, and established a Youth Crime Watch Program designed to educate youth on the perils of gangs, violence, teen pregnancy, drug abuse, dropping out of school, and juvenile delinquency; and

WHEREAS, the association established a Political Action Committee in 1991, in an effort to elect the city's first African American Mayor, Dr. Willie Herenton, and were passionate supporters of State Supreme Court Justice Adolpho Birch; and

WHEREAS, the esteemed civil AAPA adopted the Community Policing philosophy and supported the Memphis Police Department's COACT mentoring programs to include Leaders of Tomorrow, G.I.R.L.S., S.T.E.P., and Wisdom in Westwood and Graceland, as well as establishing a senior citizen outreach program to assist elderly citizens with the purchase of medication and with financial hardships; and

WHEREAS, the AAPA furnishes hundreds of Christmas Baskets and toys each year to families in need, sponsors a hardship program for the Memphis community on a case-by-case basis, and donates hundreds of backpacks and school supplies each year; and

WHEREAS, instrumental to the betterment of Memphis, the AAPA recognizes outstanding community service each year at the AAPA Black History Program, as well as adopting the Harriet Jubilee Performers mentoring program, and donating a theatre to the performers that is located within the AAPA office building; and

WHEREAS, elevated to greater heights by the sacrifice and blessings of previous leaders, the present and longest serving board of the AAPA consists of Tyrone Currie, LaTanya Able, Vernon VanBuren, Gloria Suggs, Kevin Williams, Flo Billingsley, April Finley, Robbin Campbell, Bobby Jones, John Grandberry, and Chris Price; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly wholeheartedly embraces the noble ideals and worthy goals of the Afro American Police Association; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize and commend the Afro American Police Association for its brave and valiant service to the Memphis community, and honor the seminal group for its unparalleled pursuit of justice and equality in our great State.

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