

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 885

By Harper

A RESOLUTION to recognize Tennessee State University on the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those commemorative events that are celebrations of our heritage and culture; and

WHEREAS, one such worthy event is the centennial anniversary of Tennessee State University, one of our State's prestigious Historically Black Colleges and Universities; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee State University is a comprehensive coeducational land-grant university established by an act of the Tennessee General Assembly in 1909. It opened its doors on June 19, 1912, to an inaugural student body of two-hundred-forty-seven individuals as the Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School for Negroes; and

WHEREAS, through successive stages, Tennessee State University has developed from a black normal school to its current status as a national university with a diverse body of students from forty-four states and thirty-eight countries; and

WHEREAS, in 1922, Tennessee State University was raised to the status of a four-year teachers' college, and the first degrees were granted in June of 1924. By 1944, the educational programs of the institution were substantially upgraded, upgrades which included the establishment of graduate studies; and

WHEREAS, having gained Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation in 1946, Tennessee State University received full land-grant university status in 1958; and

WHEREAS, by court order resulting from decades-long litigation, the University of Tennessee at Nashville was merged into Tennessee State University in 1977. The decision in the landmark case, Geier vs. Tennessee, effectively dismantled the dual system of higher

education that had evolved in Tennessee, and expanded the bounds of Tennessee State University significantly; and

WHEREAS, during its one-hundred-year existence, Tennessee State University has grown exponentially in both programming and enrollment, and today, more than 9000 students pursue higher learning within the seven colleges that make up the university: the College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Sciences, the College of Business, the College of Education, the College of Engineering, Technology, and Computer Science, the College of Health Sciences, the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Public Service and Urban Affairs, and the School of Graduate Studies and Research; and

WHEREAS, today, Tennessee State University confers bachelor degrees in forty-five subject areas, master degrees in twenty-four areas, and doctoral degrees in seven areas; and

WHEREAS, boasting an alumni roster replete with distinguished and renowned persons, Tennessee State University is the alma mater of several members of this venerable body, including Senators Thelma Harper and Ophelia Ford and Representatives Brenda Gilmore, Barbara Cooper, Mary Pruitt, and Mike Turner; and

WHEREAS, under the steady leadership of Dr. Portia Holmes Shields, Tennessee State University continues its rich tradition as an institution devoted to making a strong impact on the world, ever pushing and supporting young minds to be bold and stretch to greater heights of academic greatness; and

WHEREAS, now as this fine university closes the door on its first one hundred years and forges ahead into the twenty-first century, it is proper for this body to join with the students, alumni, faculty, and administration of Tennessee State University in celebration of the remarkable journey of this august institution, which has focused on and arrived at a state of excellence in scholarly inquiry, research, and life-long learning; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize Tennessee State University on the occasion of its

100th anniversary. We wish all students, past and present, as well as faculty and administrators all the best during their centennial celebration and in the years to come.

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