

By: Senator S. Flowers

## SENATE RESOLUTION

TO HONOR WILLIE KAVANAUGH HOCKER AS THE CREATOR OF THE ARKANSAS STATE FLAG ON THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FLAG; TO PROCLAIM FEBRUARY 26, 2013, AS WILLIE KAVANAUGH HOCKER DAY; AND TO SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MEMORIAL IN WABBASEKA, ARKANSAS, HONORING WILLIE KAVANAUGH HOCKER AND THE OFFICIAL STATE FLAG THAT SHE DESIGNED.

### Subtitle

TO HONOR WILLIE KAVANAUGH HOCKER AS THE CREATOR OF THE ARKANSAS STATE FLAG; TO COMMEMORATE THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARKANSAS STATE FLAG; AND TO SUPPORT AN APPROPRIATE MEMORIAL IN WABBASEKA, ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS, Willie Kavanaugh Hocker was born on July 21, 1862, in Madison County, Kentucky, moved with her family to Arkansas in 1870, taught school in Pine Bluff and Wabbaseka for 34 years and established residences in both cities, was a published poet and short story author, best known for her poems "Arkansas" and "Ozark Mountaineer", and died in her home in Wabbaseka on February 6, 1944; and

WHEREAS, Willie Hocker represented Arkansas at the National Federation of Business and Professional Women Clubs' Pageant of Famous Women of the United States in 1929, was a longtime member of the Daughters of the American



Revolution, and on October 14, 1938, the respected educator was honored by the Wabaseka School Board's dedication of the first modern brick building in Jefferson County, a newly built high school in her honor; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1900's the U.S.S. Arkansas was a newly commissioned Navy battleship, and the roots of the official state flag, which originated in Jefferson County, can be traced to 1912 when the Pine Bluff Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution resolved to present a naval battalion ensign and a state flag for the new ship; and

WHEREAS, at the chapter's urging, Secretary of State Earl W. Hodges initiated a contest seeking potential designs for the flag and agreed to chair a legislative committee to select the winning design; and

WHEREAS, in 1913 the committee chose a red, white, and blue design submitted by Willie Hocker of Wabaseka, Arkansas, from among 65 entries, and Willie Hocker is one of only two women in the United States to have her design adopted as an official state flag; and

WHEREAS, the design featured a rectangular red field upon which was centered a white rhombus diamond bordered by twenty-five white stars on a blue band, three blue stars centered on the flag's horizontal axis on a white field within the rhombus completing the plan, and the three blue stars in the center field bore several meanings: first, that Arkansas had successively belonged to the three countries of France, Spain, and the United States before statehood; second, that 1803 was the year of the Louisiana Purchase, which included present-day Arkansas; and third, that Arkansas was the third state created from the Louisiana Purchase; and

WHEREAS, the design's twenty-five white stars symbolized that Arkansas was the twenty-fifth state admitted to the Union; and the diamond marked Arkansas's status as the nation's only diamond-producing state; and

WHEREAS, the committee decreed that the flag ought to bear the state's name; the designer of the flag assented and suggested that the three blue stars be arranged with one above the name and two below; on February 26,

1913, the General Assembly adopted the design as the state's official flag; the design remained unchanged until 1923, when the General Assembly added a fourth star to the central diamond to represent Arkansas's membership in the Confederate States of America; at first, the stars were arranged with two above and two below the state's name, but the Second Extraordinary Session in 1924 placed three stars below and one above, with the three lower stars arranged as an inverted triangle and a new element of symbolism was added by the twin stars immediately below the state's name, suggesting the twin relationship of Arkansas and Michigan, which were admitted to the Union within approximately seven months of each other, maintaining the balance between free and slave states in Congress; and

WHEREAS, the Arkansas state flag is today flown over thousands of governmental and private locations throughout the state and the State of Arkansas is proud to observe the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the official state flag,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the Senate honors the memory and accomplishments of Willie Kavanaugh Hocker as the mother of the Arkansas state flag and salutes the 100th anniversary of the flag.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Senate declares February 26, 2013, Willie Kavanaugh Hocker Day and supports and encourages the establishment of a memorial in her hometown, Wabaseka, Arkansas, honoring Willie Kavanaugh Hocker and the official flag for the State of Arkansas that she designed.