

By: Representatives F. Allen, Blake, K. Ferguson, Nicks, Tucker

HOUSE RESOLUTION

COMMEMORATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HISTORIC
INTEGRATION OF LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL.

Subtitle

COMMEMORATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
HISTORIC INTEGRATION OF LITTLE ROCK
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL.

WHEREAS, September 25, 2017, will mark the 60th anniversary of the first full day of integration of Little Rock's historic Central High School; and

WHEREAS, numerous events are planned through late September 2017, including the installation of a sculpture on the grounds of Central High School, education forums, interfaith services, and a concert fundraiser at Robinson Center Performance Hall for the Little Rock Nine Foundation, culminating with a ceremony at Quigley Stadium of Central High School on September 25, 2017, featuring remarks by the surviving members of the Little Rock Nine and other dignitaries; and

WHEREAS, on the morning of September 23, 1957, nine (9) African-American teenagers now commonly and affectionately known as the "Little Rock Nine" held the line against an angry mob protesting integration in front of Little Rock's Central High School; and

WHEREAS, as the students met their new classmates for the first time inside the school, violence escalated outside, and the Little Rock police



removed the Little Rock Nine from the school for their safety. The next day President Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered the United States Army's 101st Airborne Division into Little Rock to escort the nine (9) students into Central High School, and each student was assigned his or her own guard; and

WHEREAS, as Melba Patillo Beals later remembered, "After three full days inside Central, I knew that integration [was] a much bigger word than I thought"; and

WHEREAS, the integration of Central High School was broadcast across the nation and around the world; was the site of the first important test for the implementation of the United States Supreme Court's historic decision in the case of Brown v. Board of Education in 1954; became the epitome of state resistance to desegregation when Governor Orval Faubus directly questioned the authority of the federal court system and the validity of desegregation; and forced the nation to resolve to enforce African-American civil rights in the face of massive southern defiance during the years following the Brown v. Board of Education decision; and

WHEREAS, the Little Rock Nine should be commended individually for their courage, determination, and significant roles in the civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, Minnijean Brown Trickey was born September 11, 1941, in Little Rock and entered Central High School at the age of sixteen (16). Although all of the Little Rock Nine experienced verbal and physical harassment during the 1957-1958 school year at Central, Minnijean Brown Trickey was the first suspended and later expelled for retaliating against the daily torment. She moved to New York in February, 1958, and lived with Doctors Kenneth B. and Mamie Clark, both African-American psychologists. Minnijean Brown Trickey graduated from New York's New Lincoln High School in 1959 and attended Southern Illinois University, majoring in journalism. She later moved to Canada where she received a bachelor's degree in Social Work in Native Human Services from Laurentian University and a master's degree in Social Work from Carleton University in Ontario, Canada. Minnijean Brown Trickey is a social activist and has worked on behalf of peacemaking, environmental issues,

developing youth leadership, diversity education and training, cross-cultural communication, and gender and social justice advocacy. She served in the Clinton Administration as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Workforce Diversity at the United States Department of the Interior from 1999 to 2001. Trickey has taught social work at Carleton University and in various community colleges in Canada and is the recipient of numerous awards for her community work for social justice, including the Lifetime Achievement Tribute by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the International Wolf Award for contributions to racial harmony; and

WHEREAS, the image of fifteen-year-old Elizabeth Eckford walking alone through a screaming mob in front of Central High School propelled the integration crisis into the nation's living rooms and brought international attention to Little Rock. Elizabeth Eckford was born on October 4, 1941, and is one (1) of six (6) children. On September 4, 1957, Eckford arrived at Central High School alone, got off the bus one (1) block from the school, and tried to enter the campus but was turned away by Arkansas National Guard troops. She then confronted an angry mob of people opposing integration, chanting, "Two, four, six, eight, we ain't gonna integrate." As she made her way down the block, Eckford attempted two (2) more times to enter the school campus but was blocked by the guardsmen, who were there under orders from the Governor to keep the black students out. Eckford made her way through the mob and sat on a bus bench at the end of the block. She was eventually able to board a city bus and went to her mother's job at the Arkansas School for the Deaf. Because all of the city's high schools were closed the following year, Eckford did not graduate from Central High School. She joined the United States Army and was able to earn her general equivalency diploma and returned to Little Rock in the 1960s to be closer to her parents. She attended Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. Eckford is an Army veteran and has taken jobs in a variety of settings throughout her life as a waitress, a history teacher, a welfare worker, an unemployment and employment interviewer, and a military reporter. In 1997, she received the Father Joseph Blitz Award of the National Conference for Community and Justice; and

WHEREAS, Ernest Green was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on September 22, 1941. Green made history as the only senior among the Little Rock Nine.

His place in Arkansas' civil rights history was solidified when he persevered through a year of daily harassment by some of his fellow students to become the first African-American Central High School graduate on May 27, 1958. Sitting with Green's family at the event was the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who attended the graduation virtually unnoticed. An active member of the community from an early age, Green regularly attended church. He was involved in the Boy Scouts and eventually became an Eagle Scout. He was a student at Horace Mann High School before volunteering to integrate the all-white Central High School. After graduating from high school, Green attended Michigan State University, earning a bachelor's degree in 1962 and a master's degree in sociology in 1964. Afterwards, he served as the director for the A. Phillip Randolph Education Fund from 1968 to 1977. He then was appointed the Assistant Secretary of Labor during President Jimmy Carter's administration from 1977 to 1981. Green was a Managing Director of Barclays Capital (formerly Lehman Brothers) from 1987 until 2009 and now serves on the advisory board of AFIG Funds. He has served on numerous boards, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. In 1992, Disney produced a television special The Ernest Green Story which is still popular today for students of all ages and used in classrooms around the world to teach about the Little Rock Nine; and

WHEREAS, Thelma Mothershed Wair was born in 1940 in Bloomberg, Texas. Wair attended Dunbar Junior High School and Horace Mann High School before transferring to Central High School. Despite daily torment from white students at Central High School, she completed her junior year at the formerly all-white high school during the tumultuous 1957-1958 school year. Because the city's high schools were closed the following year, Wair earned the necessary credits for graduation through correspondence courses and by attending summer school in St. Louis, Missouri. She received her diploma from Central High School by mail. Thelma Mothershed Wair graduated from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, in 1964 and earned her master's degree in Guidance and Counseling Education, as well as an Administrative Certificate in Education from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. Wair taught home economics in the East St. Louis school system for twenty-eight (28) years before retiring in 1994. Wair has also worked at the St. Clair County

Jail, Juvenile Detention Center in St. Clair County, Illinois, and was an instructor of survival skills for women at the American Red Cross Shelter for the homeless. During the 1989-1990 school year, she was honored as an Outstanding Role Model by the East St. Louis, Illinois, chapter of the Top Ladies of Distinction and the early childhood/pre-kindergarten staff of District 189; and

WHEREAS, Melba Pattillo Beals was born on December 7, 1941, in Little Rock, Arkansas. She later recounted her experience at Central High School in her book Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle To Desegregate Little Rock's Central High School. Beals grew up surrounded by family members who knew the importance of an education. Her mother, Lois Patillo, PhD, had been among the first African-Americans to graduate from the University of Arkansas in 1954. At Central High, Beals faced daily harassment from white students and as Beals later recounted, the soldier assigned to protect her instructed, "In order to get through this year, you will have to become a soldier. Never let your enemy know what you are feeling." Beals took the soldier's advice and finished the school year. Barred from entering Central High School the following year when the city's schools were closed, Beals moved to Santa Rosa, California, for her senior year of high school. Beals graduated from San Francisco State University with a bachelor's degree. She earned a master's degree from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, worked as a reporter for NBC, and has served as a communications consultant. Beals was also the first of the Little Rock Nine to write a book based on her experiences at Central High School. Published in 1995, the book is a first-hand account of the trials and tribulations that Beals and the other eight (8) students encountered from segregationists and racist students. The book was named an ALA Notable Book for 1995 and won the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award that same year. She has also written White is a State of Mind, published in 1999, which follows Beals from her senior year in high school to her college and family days in California and serves as a sequel to Warriors Don't Cry; and

WHEREAS, Carlotta Walls LaNier, the oldest of three (3) daughters, was born on December 18, 1942, in Little Rock, Arkansas. LaNier made history as the youngest member of the Little Rock Nine. Inspired by Rosa Parks, she had

a desire to get the best education available by enrolling in Central High School. White students called her names and spat on her while armed guards escorted her to classes, but LaNier concentrated on her studies throughout the school year. LaNier was prevented from attending Central High School the next year when the Little Rock high schools were closed, but she returned to Central High School and graduated in 1960. LaNier attended Michigan State University for two (2) years before moving with her family to Denver. In 1968, she earned a bachelor's degree from Colorado State College, now the University of Northern Colorado, and began working at the Young Women's Christian Association as a program administrator for teenagers. In 1977, she founded LaNier and Company, a real estate brokerage firm. Her experience in real estate includes everything from constructing and remodeling properties to marketing and selling them. LaNier has served as the president of the Little Rock Nine Foundation, a scholarship organization dedicated to ensuring equal access to education for African-Americans. She has also served as a trustee for the Iliff School of Theology. In 2009, she published her memoir, A Mighty Long Way: My Journey to Justice at Little Rock Central High School; and

WHEREAS, Terrence Roberts was born December 3, 1941, in Little Rock, Arkansas. Roberts was a sophomore at Horace Mann High School when he volunteered to integrate Central High School. When the city's high schools were closed to prevent further desegregation, Roberts moved to Los Angeles, California, and graduated from Los Angeles High School in 1959. Following his graduation from high school, Roberts attended California State University and was awarded a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1967. He went on to attend graduate school at the University of California at Los Angeles and received a master's degree in social welfare in 1970. In 1976, Roberts was awarded a Ph.D. in psychology from Southern Illinois University. He served as co-chair of the psychology master's degree program at Antioch College in Los Angeles, California and also taught graduate courses there. In addition to serving as CEO of Terrence J. Roberts and Associates Management Consulting Firm, he maintains a private psychology practice and is desegregation consultant to the Little Rock School District. In 2009, Roberts published a memoir entitled Lessons from Little Rock, which was followed in 2010 by his second book, Simple Not Easy: Reflections on Community Social Responsibility and

Tolerance. Roberts has served on the boards of the Economic Resources Center in Southern California, Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena, Eisenhower World Affairs Institute, and Little Rock Nine Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Jefferson Thomas was born in 1942 in Little Rock, Arkansas. A quiet young man with a sense of humor, Thomas was a track athlete at Horace Mann High School when he chose to volunteer to integrate all-white Central High School for the 1957-1958 school year as a sophomore. The Little Rock Nine were harassed daily by white students, and Thomas' quiet demeanor made him a target for bullies at the school. He graduated from Central High School in 1960 and eventually became an accountant for the United States Department of Defense. Thomas attended what is now California State University in Los Angeles, where he received a degree in business administration. In 1964, Thomas narrated the documentary Nine from Little Rock, which won an Academy Award. Jefferson Thomas passed away on September 5, 2010, in Columbus, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, Gloria Cecelia Ray Karlmark was born September 26, 1942, in Little Rock. She was the third child of H.C. Ray, Sr. and Julia Miller Ray. Mr. Ray was already a retired federal employee when Gloria entered Central High. H.C. Ray, Sr. had founded the Arkansas Agricultural Extension Service for Negroes after retiring from the United States Department of Agriculture. These facts strongly influenced Gloria Ray's choice to attend Central High School. She was fourteen (14) years of age when she finished Dunbar Junior High School and registered to attend Central High School for her sophomore year. Ray, like the others of the Little Rock Nine, was tormented by certain white students who called her names, threw things at her, spit at her, vandalized her locker, and even pushed her down a flight of stairs. Still, like the others, she was determined to finish the year. The following year when all public high schools in Little Rock remained closed, Ray moved to Missouri, where her mother had been able to find employment, and attended the newly integrated Kansas City Central High School. After high school graduation, she attended the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. She graduated in 1965 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and mathematics. In 1966, she joined the Illinois Institute of Technology's Research Institute as Assistant Mathematician on the APT IV (robotics) project, which included work

at Boeing in Seattle, McDonnell-Douglas in Santa Monica and NASA Automation Center in St. Louis. In 1970, Gloria Ray Karlmark joined IBM Nordic Laboratory in Sweden, working as a system analyst/technical writer. After graduating as patent attorney from Kungliga Patent & Registreringsverket in Stockholm, 1977, Ray Karlmark worked for IBM International Patent Operations as European Patent Attorney until 1981, when she moved to Belgium and began working for N.V. Philips Gloeilampenfabrieken as CAD/CAM and Technical Product Documentation Specialist. From 1976 to 1994, Ray Karlmark founded and served as Editor-in-Chief of Computers in Industry, an international journal of practice and experience of computer applications in industry. In 1994, she went to work in the Netherlands, first for Philips Telecommunications in Hilversum and later for Philips Lighting in Eindhoven; and

WHEREAS, as astutely put by Ernest Green, "We kids [integrated Central High School] mainly because we didn't know any better, but our parents were willing to put their careers and their homes on the line"; and

WHEREAS, the trials and tribulations of the Little Rock Nine and their families should always be remembered as beacons of strength in the face of overwhelming odds, dignity in the face of adversity, courage in the face of hostility, and perseverance for the betterment of their fellow man and the ultimate success of the civil rights movement,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House of Representatives respectfully commemorates the 60th anniversary of the historic integration of Little Rock Central High School and honors the achievements of the Little Rock Nine and their families.

/s/F. Allen