

By: Representative Ennett

## HOUSE RESOLUTION

TO RECOGNIZE SCIPIO AFRICANUS JONES AND HIS ROLE IN  
DEFENDING MEN ACCUSED IN THE ELAINE MASSACRE OF 1919.

### Subtitle

TO RECOGNIZE SCIPIO AFRICANUS JONES AND  
HIS ROLE IN DEFENDING MEN ACCUSED IN THE  
ELAINE MASSACRE OF 1919.

WHEREAS, Scipio Africanus Jones was a prominent Little Rock attorney and a leading Black citizen at the end of the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones was born the child of a slave, Jemmima Jones, in 1863, in Tulip, Arkansas, and attended schools for Black children in the area before moving to Little Rock and attending Walden Seminary, now Philander Smith College, where he completed the four-year college preparatory course in just three (3) years before receiving his bachelor's degree from Bethel Institute, now Shorter College, in 1885; and

WHEREAS, after college, Mr. Jones taught public school while studying law on his own time, and in 1889 he passed the bar examination and was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of Arkansas in 1900 and to the United States Supreme Court in 1905; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones practiced law in Little Rock for the rest of his life and frequently represented indigent citizens and worked to correct abuse and injustice in Arkansas's penal system, and he served as judge in both



temporary and special capacities throughout his career; and

WHEREAS, the most significant case with which Mr. Jones was involved was the defense of twelve (12) Black men who were arrested following the Elaine Massacre of 1919 and sentenced to death later that year for murder in what the prosecution called a Black uprising; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones was hired by the Black citizens of Little Rock to work with the firm of George W. Murphy, an attorney hired by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, to secure the release of the men, who were convicted in trials marked by weak evidence, a lack of cross-examination of the witnesses, and short deliberations by the juries; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones and the legal team were successful in securing the release of all twelve (12) men by January 1925, and Mr. Jones is quoted as saying the case was "the greatest case against peonage and mob law ever fought in the land",

NOW THEREFORE,

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

THAT the House of Representatives recognize Scipio Africanus Jones for his contributions to the State of Arkansas.