

By: Representatives T. Shephard, F. Allen, Nicks, K. Ferguson, Springer, V. Flowers, Scott, J. Richardson, Ennett

By: Senators F. Love, R. Murdock, L. Chesterfield

## **HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE RALPH WILCOX AND THE DIVISION OF ARKANSAS HERITAGE FOR THEIR WORK IN PRESERVING THE REMAINING STRUCTURES AND HISTORY OF THE ROSENWALD SCHOOLS IN ARKANSAS; AND TO HONOR THE LEGACY OF THE ROSENWALD SCHOOLS AND EDUCATE FUTURE GENERATIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROSENWALD PROJECT IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

### **Subtitle**

TO RECOGNIZE RALPH WILCOX AND THE DIVISION OF ARKANSAS HERITAGE FOR THEIR WORK IN PRESERVING THE REMAINING STRUCTURES AND HISTORY OF THE ROSENWALD SCHOOLS IN ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS, during the period of 1912 through 1932, American philanthropist and business executive Julius Rosenwald constructed five thousand three hundred fifty-seven (5,357) schools and related buildings in fifteen (15) southern states; and

WHEREAS, the Rosenwald School building program was a Progressive Era program that provided grants to build schools for African Americans across the South; and

WHEREAS, Julius Rosenwald partnered with African American educator and



activist Booker T. Washington in an effort to improve the education available to African Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Rosenwald School building program has since been called the most important initiative to advance Black education in the early twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, despite the Rosenwald Schools' historical significance, only a small percentage of Americans are familiar with the Rosenwald School structures and their impact on the history of the United States; and

WHEREAS, while some of the Rosenwald Schools are being preserved for community use, lack of resources and neglect threaten the preservation of many other Rosenwald Schools; and

WHEREAS, there were very few Rosenwald Schools listed on the National Register for Historic Places in the 1980s and 1990s, and the Division of Arkansas Heritage did not have a concentrated focus on documenting the Arkansas Rosenwald Schools until they were placed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's eleven (11) most endangered list in 2022; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Wilcox, the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer for the Division of Arkansas Heritage, determined which Rosenwald Schools remained in Arkansas, and the Division of Arkansas Heritage completed a comprehensive survey of the remaining Rosenwald Schools; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Arkansas Heritage found that less than twenty (20) of the Rosenwald Schools in Arkansas survived; and

WHEREAS, between 2004 and 2006, Ralph Wilcox submitted a written nomination for each Rosenwald School building eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, the National Trust held several Rosenwald School conferences, and the work that Ralph Wilcox did was praised and used as a model for other states to follow when documenting their Rosenwald Schools; and

WHEREAS, as of today the following Rosenwald School buildings located in Arkansas are listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- (1) Dunbar Junior and Senior High School and Junior College, Little Rock;
- (2) Bigelow Rosenwald School, Toad Suck;
- (3) Oak Grove Rosenwald School, Oak Grove;
- (4) Dallas County Training School High School Building, Fordyce;
- (5) Peake High School, Arkadelphia;
- (6) Marion Colored High School, Sunset;
- (7) Selma Rosenwald School, Selma;
- (8) Malvern Rosenwald School, Malvern;
- (9) Lafayette County Training School, Stamps;
- (10) Kiblah School, Doddridge; and
- (11) Mt. Olive Rosenwald School, Mt. Olive,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT the House of Representatives and the Senate recognize Ralph Wilcox and the Division of Arkansas Heritage for their work in preserving the remaining structures and history of the Rosenwald Schools in Arkansas.