

2011 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 757

Commending Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48 on the occasion of its 215th anniversary.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 28, 2011

Agreed to by the Senate, February 3, 2011

WHEREAS, Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48, part of the nation's largest and oldest fraternal organization, will celebrate its historic 215-year anniversary in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48 members first met on October 3, 1796, in the home of James White, a local merchant, with William King, owner of the salt mines located in present-day Saltville, serving as First Master; and

WHEREAS, the first members of Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48 were veterans of the early and formative events and experiences of the Commonwealth and nation; many had served as the earliest settlers of the Overmountain country area and had fought in the Revolutionary War; and

WHEREAS, notable member Francis Smith Preston was a member of the House of Delegates from 1788 to 1789 and 1812 to 1814, a member of the Virginia Senate from 1816 to 1820, and a member of the Third and Fourth United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, while a member of the United States Congress, Francis Preston received a unique gift, a ladle made from eastern buffalo horn and elk antler, from fellow Mason and outgoing President of the United States, George Washington; and

WHEREAS, the ladle was made from the trophies of a hunting excursion that George Washington and Francis Preston's father had made to Southwest Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the rare ladle remained in the Preston family until 1872 when the wife of Virginia Governor John B. Floyd, Sarah Preston Floyd, presented the ladle to the Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48, which continues to treasure it to this day; and

WHEREAS, Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48 continued to grow during the next century with its members serving as dedicated local, state, and federal public servants; admired college presidents; and prominent ministers in the Episcopal and Methodist denominations; and

WHEREAS, in 1881 Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48 member Reuben Muriel Page, Esq., became the only member of the Lodge to have the distinction of serving the Commonwealth as Grand Master, a position he held until 1883; and

WHEREAS, Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48 has even had its influence extended to the creation of rituals for college fraternities, namely, Kappa Sigma; and

WHEREAS, in 1871 Stephen Alonzo Jackson, a student at the University of Virginia, was inducted into Kappa Sigma, and after his graduation, returned to Abingdon and joined Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48; and

WHEREAS, Stephen Jackson rewrote the constitution and ritual of Kappa Sigma, combining the European and North American traditions into a Masonic structure that is still in use today with minor modifications; and

WHEREAS, during the twentieth century, Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48 continued to attract new members, including renowned actor Ernest Borgnine who received his three "Blue Lodge" degrees there and returns at least every 10 years to receive his Masonic Veterans Anniversary Pin; and

WHEREAS, Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48 enjoys a long and rich history whose members have given distinguished service to the local community, Commonwealth, and country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend the Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48 on the occasion of its historic 215th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Abingdon Masonic Lodge No. 48 as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations and gratitude for the services the Lodge's members have rendered to the Commonwealth.

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