

2013 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 857

Commending the Jefferson School City Center.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 15, 2013
Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 2013

WHEREAS, the Freedmen's Aid Society founded schools throughout the South to educate newly freed slaves and sent a teacher, Anna Gardner, to Charlottesville, Virginia, to open Jefferson School in 1865 in the Delevan Hotel on West Main Street; and

WHEREAS, in 1894 land at the corner of Fourth and Commerce Streets was transferred to the City of Charlottesville for the construction of the Jefferson Colored Graded/Elementary School; and

WHEREAS, in 1924 parents and community leaders petitioned the city to provide a high school for African American students; in 1926 Jefferson High School was completed on the Fourth and Commerce site, with its final graduating class in 1951; and

WHEREAS, Jefferson School subsequently served as the Jefferson Elementary School, and, in 1965, Jefferson School became a junior high school serving both African American and white students; from 1975 until 1992, it served as a "swing school" for elementary schools undergoing renovations, and also served at various times as a consolidated city-county health department and storage and office space for the school system, as well as a citywide pre-school program; and

WHEREAS, Jefferson School has served for over 125 years as a cornerstone for African American citizens in Charlottesville and surrounding Albemarle County, providing a venue and focal point for their emergence as a dynamic and vital part of the community's social history during the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the efforts of the Jefferson School alumni, Citizens for Jefferson School and numerous other organizations and individuals, the city council established the Jefferson School Task Force in 2002 and, in 2007, appointed the school to the Jefferson School Community Partnership; and

WHEREAS, Jefferson School is now listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register; and

WHEREAS, Jefferson School has reopened as the Jefferson School City Center, including an African American Heritage Center as well as numerous organizations providing educational, child care, health care, recreational, and other services to the community, and is supported by the Jefferson School Foundation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Jefferson School City Center on the occasion of its grand reopening; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Jefferson School City Center as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations and admiration for its commitment to serving the residents of Charlottesville.

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