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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 1075

Offered February 20, 2017

Commending the Douglass School.

Patrons—Minchew, LaRock, Boysko and Carr; Senators: Black, Favola and Wexton

WHEREAS, in 2016, the Douglass School in Leesburg celebrated its 75th anniversary and its unique and important role in Loudoun County history; and

WHEREAS, opened in 1941, during the Jim Crow era and when school segregation was prevalent, the Douglass School served as the first accredited high school for African American students in Loudoun County; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1940s, members of the African American community in Loudoun County organized the County-Wide League, with the primary goal of establishing a high school for black students; and

WHEREAS, the group raised \$4,000 to buy eight acres and then sold the land to the Loudoun County School Board for one dollar, in exchange for their agreement to build what became Douglass High School; and

WHEREAS, Douglass High School opened in September 1941, after the County-Wide League raised money to purchase furnishings and books for the school, and was named for famed abolitionist Frederick Douglass, to symbolize the perseverance of the group that fought tirelessly for the school; and

WHEREAS, the teachers of Douglass High School were devoted to supporting their students' success and made it their mission to see that graduates were prepared for whatever the world had to offer; and

WHEREAS, Douglass High School served African American students until 1968, when schools were desegregated, and, since 1976, what became known as the Douglass School has been an alternative education center for Loudoun County Public Schools and is also home to the Douglass Community Center; and

WHEREAS, the nonprofit Loudoun Douglass School Alumni Association was formed in 1985 to preserve the history of Douglass High School and to recognize the contributions of the black community who made it a reality; and

WHEREAS, the alumni of the Douglass School continue to play an important role in the Loudoun community, and they understand that the Douglass School was a special place where lives were changed, and those lives changed lives; and

WHEREAS, the Douglass School has been listed on both national and Virginia registers of historic places since the early 1990s, and the school is a focal point for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day festivities and other black history events; and

WHEREAS, for 75 years, the Douglass School has been a tangible symbol of the tenacity and strength of African Americans in Loudoun County, who persevered through nearly insurmountable obstacles to fight for equality; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Douglass School on celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2016; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Douglass School as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its special history and its continued service to the Loudoun community.

INTRODUCED

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