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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 137

Offered January 17, 2018

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of Charles C. Green et al. v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia et al.

Patrons—Peace; Senator: Norment

WHEREAS, the *Oliver Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et al.* decision in 1954 determined the policy of "separate but equal" to be unconstitutional and declared that separate schools for black and white students were inherently unequal, but did not define the process by which schools would be desegregated; and

WHEREAS, plans adopted by school systems throughout the nation did not bring about the desired integration of public schools, and 10 years after the ruling, both public schools in New Kent County, George W. Watkins School for blacks and New Kent School for whites, remained completely segregated; and

WHEREAS, in March 1965, Dr. Calvin Coolidge Green, president of the New Kent County Chapter of the NAACP, a veteran of the Korean War, a Richmond schoolteacher, the husband of Mary Ella Osborne Green, and the father of three sons, Charles C. Green, Robert C. Green, and Anthony Green filed *Charles C. Green et al. v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia et al.* in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia in the name of his youngest son, Charles C. Green, seeking to compel the New Kent County School Board to integrate the county's schools; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Green was assisted by the NAACP, attorneys Jack Greenberg, James M. Nabrit III, and Franklin E. White, as well as two of the Commonwealth's preeminent civil rights attorneys, S. W. Tucker and Henry L. Marsh III; and

WHEREAS, the decision in *Charles C. Green et al. v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia et al.* was handed down by the United States Supreme Court on May 27, 1968; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court established the duty of school boards across the country to eliminate all vestiges of state-imposed segregation, placing an affirmative duty on school boards to "convert to a unitary system in which racial discrimination would be eliminated root and branch"; and

WHEREAS, *Charles C. Green et al. v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia et al.* is recognized as the most significant public school desegregation decision of the Supreme Court after *Oliver Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et al.*, changing the practice of school systems throughout the nation; and

WHEREAS, both the George W. Watkins School and the New Kent School are designated as National Historic Landmarks by virtue of their involvement in the *Green* decision and are included by the National Park Service among its Teaching with Historic Places lesson plans; and

WHEREAS, Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote in a private note shortly before the *Green* decision was issued, "When this opinion is handed down, the traffic light will have changed from Brown to Green. Amen!"; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Green died on February 10, 2011, at his residence in Quinton in New Kent County at the age of 79; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of New Kent County, the New Kent County School Board, the New Kent County Chapter of the NAACP, the G. W. Watkins Alumni Association, the New Kent County Historical Society, the New Kent County Historic Commission, and the African American Heritage Society of New Kent County all recognize and celebrate the significance of the *Green* decision; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the 50th anniversary of *Charles C. Green et al. v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia et al.* and its significance for all Virginians and all Americans; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Dr. Calvin Coolidge Green, whose principled foresight initiated the case and advanced the cause of the Civil Rights Movement.

INTRODUCED

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