

2019 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 237

Commending Thomas Jefferson High School.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 4, 2019

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson High School in Richmond, a comprehensive and storied educational institution, celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson High School was designed by Charles Robinson as a solid, art deco-style institution; with its impressive interior and exterior, the building remains a striking architectural structure designated as a Virginia Historical Landmark; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson High School's opening day was September 11, 1930, which was a little more than a year after its cornerstone was laid; it was built to relieve overcrowding at the time in a West End location that was then far from the high-density population of the city's central core; and

WHEREAS, since the first students graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in 1932, tens of thousands of students have followed in their footsteps; throughout the years, many significant events have transpired; students attending the school endured the Great Depression, and over a thousand students and alumni served in World War II, with over 70 giving their lives; students served in military conflicts throughout the school's history; and

WHEREAS, throughout the decades, high academic achievement was an expectation that permeated Thomas Jefferson High School's culture, with Advanced Placement courses offered in world history, mathematics, and sciences; a business department that offered courses for success in that field; and a cadet corps that prepared students for the military; and

WHEREAS, athletics and extracurricular activities have been an important part of Thomas Jefferson High School; in the early years, over 20 different service and interest organizations existed, giving students a broad range of opportunities to get involved in student life beyond the classroom; and

WHEREAS, although Thomas Jefferson High School was economically diverse from its opening day, it was racially segregated by legal mandates; following the Brown v. Board of Education case, Jane Cooper Johnson was the first African American student to enroll at the school in 1962; and

WHEREAS, Richmond eventually adopted a freedom of choice plan, diversifying the Thomas Jefferson High School student body and faculty further; following the court order on August 17, 1970, mandating busing, enormous demographic changes took place at the school; and

WHEREAS, a period of declining enrollment followed at Thomas Jefferson High School, resulting in two attempts to close the school, but the students who were denied admission during the days of segregation rallied their classmates, alumni, and other members of the community, then marched from the school to City Hall and convinced the school board to keep the school open; and

WHEREAS, once again Thomas Jefferson High School is a growing, vibrant educational resource with a dedicated staff that continues to serve many cultures which reflect dynamic changes in Richmond and in national populations; in addition to a traditional high school program for college-bound and non-college-bound students, a rigorous International Baccalaureate program is offered to any student who lives in the City of Richmond; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Thomas Jefferson High School in Richmond hereby be commended on the occasion of its 90th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Thomas Jefferson High School as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the school's commitment to educating and nurturing generations of students.

ENROLLED

HR237ER