

2020 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 20

Designating March 28, in 2020 and in each succeeding year, as James Solomon Russell Day in Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 29, 2020

WHEREAS, James Solomon Russell was born into slavery on the Hendrick Plantation near Palmer Springs in Mecklenburg County on December 5, 1857; and

WHEREAS, James Solomon Russell learned the value of hard work at a young age, growing up under poverty conditions with his mother on the farm; and

WHEREAS, James Solomon Russell enrolled in Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in 1874 and supported his family by working as a teacher for local children; and

WHEREAS, James Solomon Russell's education was interrupted when he ran out of funds and had to return home to work on the farm, but he ultimately succeeded in receiving his teaching license; and

WHEREAS, while teaching with the Book of Common Prayer, James Solomon Russell became interested in the Episcopal Church; Pattie Buford of Brunswick County recognized his talents and recommended that he attend the St. Stephen's School for Colored Missionary Training in Petersburg; and

WHEREAS, James Solomon Russell built his first church in Palmer Springs while in seminary school in 1879; he was ordained in 1882 and sent to Lawrenceville to pastor a colored congregation meeting at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, in 1882, James Solomon Russell began opening schools and senior housing for the poor in the area, in addition to opening nine new parishes; and

WHEREAS, in 1888, James Solomon Russell began preparation for a higher learning institution that eventually became Saint Paul's College; he started with a two-room school called the Saul Building and helped the institution grow to a campus of 35 buildings, 50 faculty members, and 800 students; and

WHEREAS, in 1893, James Solomon Russell was named the archdeacon of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia, overseeing more than 30 churches representing thousands of congregants; and

WHEREAS, James Solomon Russell received two doctoral degrees and was twice selected as bishop, an appointment he declined; and

WHEREAS, in 1929, James Solomon Russell was honored with the William E. Harmon Foundation's gold medal award for his achievements; and

WHEREAS, James Solomon Russell died on March 28, 1935; in recognition of his exceptional accomplishments as a faith leader, James Solomon Russell was canonized as a local saint by the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That March 28, in 2020 and in each succeeding year, be designated as James Solomon Russell Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to the family of James Solomon Russell and the James Solomon Russell-Saint Paul's College Museum and Archives so that they may be apprised of the sense of the Virginia House of Delegates in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.

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