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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 558

Offered February 25, 2021

Commemorating the life and legacy of Giles Beecher Jackson.

Patrons—McClellan, Boysko, Lucas and Morrissey

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Giles Beecher Jackson, a respected attorney and prominent member of the Jackson Ward community in Richmond, was born enslaved on September 10, 1853, in Goochland County as one of 13 children to James and Hulda Jackson; and

WHEREAS, as a teenager, Giles B. Jackson became the body servant of his enslaver, a Confederate colonel, then worked on the Brook Hill Estate in Richmond after the Civil War, which is where he learned to read and write; and

WHEREAS, Giles B. Jackson married Sarah Ellen Wallace in 1874; the couple raised 14 children of their own and moved to the western edge of Jackson Ward in Richmond in 1877; and

WHEREAS, Giles B. Jackson became the first Black attorney certified to practice law before the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals in 1887; he maintained several law offices in the early 1900s before settling at 513 North Second Street in Jackson Ward; and

WHEREAS, Giles B. Jackson authored the articles of incorporation for the Savings Bank of the Grand Fountain of the United Order of True Reformers, which was the nation's first chartered Black-owned and operated bank, led by William Washington Browne; and

WHEREAS, Giles B. Jackson was appointed as vice president of the National Negro Business League by Booker T. Washington in 1900 and served in that capacity for three years; and

WHEREAS, Giles B. Jackson was commissioned as an honorary colonel and commanded an all-Black cavalry unit, the Third Civic Division, as part of President Theodore Roosevelt's inaugural parade in 1905; and

WHEREAS, Giles B. Jackson formed the Negro Development and Exposition Company of the United States of America in 1902; he curated the Negro Building at the Jamestown Ter-centennial Exposition in 1907, which was designed to celebrate the progress of Black Americans in the 300 years since the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in 1619; and he published *The Industrial History of the Negro Race of the United States*, which was an anthological account of the contributions of Black Americans; and

WHEREAS, during World War I, Giles B. Jackson was appointed as chief of the Negro Division of the U.S. Employment Service in Washington, D.C., and served in that role until 1919; and

WHEREAS, Giles B. Jackson died on August 13, 1924, at his home at 818 North 4th Street in Jackson Ward, which was demolished as a result of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike in the late 1950s, and was laid to rest in Evergreen Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, April 17, 2021, marks the 150th anniversary of the creation of Jackson Ward, which was established in 1871 as a gerrymandered political district during Reconstruction; it became the first officially registered historic Black urban neighborhood in the country and was commonly nicknamed "Little Africa," "Harlem of the South," and "Black Wall Street"; and

WHEREAS, the origins of the name Jackson Ward have been a longstanding source of debate since 1902, and while some evidence suggests the district was named for Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, other sources indicate President Andrew Jackson, James Jackson of Jackson's Beer Garden, or Giles B. Jackson, who is most deserving of the honor as a prominent resident and community leader; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the life and legacy of Giles Beecher Jackson hereby be commemorated on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the creation of the Jackson Ward district in Richmond; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the JXN Project as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for the memory of Giles Beecher Jackson and admiration for the importance of properly contextualizing Jackson Ward's origin story and working to ensure that the debate over the origins of the name do not continue for another 150 years.

INTRODUCED

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