

CHAPTER 79**(SJR 58)**

A JOINT RESOLUTION designating the Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor.

WHEREAS, the late Brigadier General Charles Young was born to enslaved parents Gabriel and Arminta Young in Mays Lick, Kentucky, on March 12, 1864; and

WHEREAS, General Charles Young was the third African American cadet to graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1889; and

WHEREAS, upon graduation, General Charles Young served with the Ninth and Tenth Cavalries; he was appointed Major in the Ohio National Guard in 1898 and placed in command of its Ninth Infantry Battalion; and during that time he served as Professor of Military Science at Wilberforce University in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, as a Captain in 1901, General Charles Young commanded a troop of the Ninth Cavalry in combat in the Philippine Islands during the Philippine Insurrection; and

WHEREAS, in 1903, General Charles Young led a cavalry unit based out of the Presidio in San Francisco; and he became the first African American Superintendent of Sequoia National Park and oversaw the extension of roads into the park, making many parts accessible to visitors for the first time; and

WHEREAS, by 1904, General Charles Young became the first African American officer appointed to duty as a military attaché, serving in Hispaniola (Haiti and Dominican Republic); by 1912, General Charles Young was military attaché to Liberia, where he was promoted to Major and developed the Liberian Frontier Forces and built roads; and in 1916, he was awarded the Spingarn Award from the NAACP for his exceptional work developing Liberia's infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, General Charles Young was reassigned to the Tenth United States Cavalry and served in the Punitive Expedition in Mexico with General Pershing from 1916 to 1917, where he led a cavalry charge against Pancho Villa's troops and was wounded rescuing a large part of the Thirteenth Cavalry; and for his leadership, General Charles Young was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of the First World War, General Charles Young challenged a decision declaring him medically unfit for service by riding 500 miles on horseback from Wilberforce, Ohio, to Washington, D.C., and by June 1918, he was reinstated and assigned as military attaché to Liberia; and

WHEREAS, General Charles Young was struck critically ill while on an intelligence mission, later died on January 8, 1922, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on June 1, 1923; and

WHEREAS, General Charles Young's extraordinary military career spanned 33 years of segregated service at a time when our nation was plagued by the internal struggle of racism; and from 1894 until his death in 1922, General Charles Young was the highest-ranking African American in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, due to the mores of the time, General Charles Young was not granted the opportunity to receive a promotion through service during the First World War; and many opine that Charles Young would have been the first African American Brigadier General in the service of the United States Military; and

WHEREAS, after dogged effort by historians and veterans' organizations, Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth approved the posthumous promotion of Charles Young to brigadier general on October 6, 2021; and

WHEREAS, at a posthumous honorary ceremony at West Point on April 29, 2022, Undersecretary of the Army Gabe Camarillo congratulated the Young family on General Charles Young's trailblazing career, which was marked by his leadership, dedication to duty, and steadfast determination, remarking, "Charles Young was a soldier, an intellectual, a civil rights pioneer, and a man who loved his family deeply. When I think of Charles Young, the word 'triumph' comes to mind. He faced unjust and harrowing circumstances that tested him time and again, but he triumphed"; and

WHEREAS, although the General Assembly has already seen fit to honor the life and accomplishments of Brigadier General Charles Young by designation of a memorial highway near his birthplace in his honor, it is appropriate that more significant recognition be granted to this trailblazing American; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly is supportive of the multistate proposal to establish a historical corridor linking Camp Nelson in Kentucky, which played a significant role in Black military history during the Civil War, and the Charles Young Buffalo Soldier National Monument in Ohio;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. The Transportation Cabinet shall designate the area from Camp Nelson in Jessamine County to the Kentucky/Ohio border at Mays Lick, Kentucky, as the "Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor" and shall denote this designation with appropriate signage and on maps where practical.

➔Section 2. The Transportation Cabinet and the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet shall work cooperatively to promote the historic, military, and cultural importance of the Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor and the many important historical sites along this route.

➔Section 3. The Transportation Cabinet and the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet shall work cooperatively with their counterparts in Ohio to promote the Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor as a unique historical treasure outlining a time in our Nation's history when great men overcame barriers to help preserve and defend their country.

Signed by Governor March 23, 2023.