

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 103

By Hardaway

A RESOLUTION to honor and commemorate Black History Month in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that this General Assembly should honor those commemorative events that are celebrations of our heritage and culture; and

WHEREAS, one such worthy commemorative event is Black History Month, which is observed during the month of February; and

WHEREAS, largely marginalized throughout much of the history of the United States, African-Americans were almost entirely omitted from historical documentation in this country until the 1920s, even though they were active participants in every major event and period since the nation's founding; and

WHEREAS, an African-American scholar, Dr. Carter G. Woodson was appalled to discover that history books largely ignored the African-American population of this country; he vowed to draw more positive attention to African-Americans and correct erroneous accounts of history; and

WHEREAS, diligent in his efforts, Dr. Woodson took on the challenge of writing about African-Americans and their voluminous contributions into our nation's history; he also established the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life (now called the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History) in 1915 and founded the widely revered *Journal of Negro History* in 1916; and

WHEREAS, in 1925, Dr. Carter Woodson launched Negro History Week with the intention of focusing awareness on the contributions of African-Americans to people throughout American society; and

WHEREAS, what began as Negro History Week—the second week in February—eventually became Black History Month in 1976, a month-long celebration in February of the estimable contributions of African-Americans to this country; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Woodson chose February because it marks the birthdays of many people who greatly influenced black history, including Abraham Lincoln, W.E.B. DuBois, and Frederick Douglass; February is also the month in which the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed and in which the N.A.A.C.P. was founded in New York City; and

WHEREAS, for many years since, Black History Month has stood as a cultural icon and a tribute to the spirit and culture of African-Americans and offered every citizen the unique opportunity to place their country's history in its proper perspective by neither hiding nor inflating the vast contributions made by African-Americans; and

WHEREAS, the theme for Black History Month in 2011 is “African Americans and the Civil War” in recognition of the vital role African-Americans played during that pivotal time in our nation's history; and

WHEREAS, thousands of intrepid African-American soldiers fought for the promises of independence and equality spoken by our founding fathers, facing not only the dangers of war but also discrimination and intolerance from their fellow man, while countless African-American patriots served with spirit and conviction beyond the battlefield in the noble quest for liberty; and

WHEREAS, though we cannot adequately express our appreciation to those courageous African-American heroes whose gallant efforts united a fractured nation and freed millions from the bonds of servitude, it is most appropriate that we should honor them to the full extent of our ability, as they made untold and innumerable sacrifices in order to ensure that the blessings of freedom were truly available to all; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should acknowledge and honor Black History Month and those courageous African-Americans who rendered sterling service during the Civil War; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, that we honor Black History Month and commemorate the souls of the brave African-Americans who gave their all to destroy the deplorable institution of slavery and achieve universal freedom in the United States.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.