

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 663

By Moon

A RESOLUTION to recognize Porter Elementary School on the occasion of its 150th anniversary.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are proud to recognize those institutions of learning that are dedicated to providing quality education to every student in their community; and

WHEREAS, Porter Elementary School is one such exemplary institution that has rendered sterling service to the children of the Wildwood community in Blount County for 150 years; and

WHEREAS, the roots of this exceptional school can be traced to the establishment of Porter Academy, which was one of twenty-seven land grant institutions chartered by the General Assembly under authorization from the federal government; and

WHEREAS, opened in 1808, Porter Academy was originally located in Maryville and purportedly named in honor of James H. Porter, who was serving in the General Assembly at the time of the school's establishment; and

WHEREAS, Porter's first teacher was Reverend Mark Moore, and among the generations of Blount Countians who would enter its doors were the legendary Sam Houston and the founder of Maryville College, Isaac Anderson; and

WHEREAS, when Porter Academy fell on hard times in 1819, the property was put up for sale for bad debt and purchased by Jacob Foute for \$173; the State of Tennessee gave \$300 for a new building in 1822, and a new facility was constructed across from the Blount County Courthouse on a lot donated by John Montgomery; and

WHEREAS, Porter Academy would continue to operate from the 1820s until the Civil War but was in a state of decay by 1866; in 1870, the Blount County Court advertised that the

community offering the most money for a building and site would be allowed to build a new school, with the Wildwood community making the highest offer; and

WHEREAS, the new school building was constructed for \$1,400 by James Davis and David Jones between 1871-1872 on five acres of land donated by Thomas Pritchett, and \$900 for school operations were obtained from the community; this third Porter Academy continued in operation until 1918, when it became Porter High School; and

WHEREAS, in 1948, an elementary school was added to the campus, and in 1955, an auditorium was added and later named for Ronald Campbell, a former principal; the gymnasium was built in 1961 and later named for Coach Galen Johnson, who led the girls' basketball team to state championships in 1959, 1963, and 1967; and

WHEREAS, a new building was constructed in 1968 with an addition built in 1973, which was just one year before the elementary school burned in 1974; as the years rolled on, Porter ceased operation as a high school in 1979 and operated as a K-8 school until 2000; and

WHEREAS, since 2001, Porter Elementary School has rendered sterling service as a K-5 school, while proudly remembering its heritage as evidenced by the display of the original bell from the third Porter Academy in the courtyard in front of the school; and

WHEREAS, for 150 years, Porter Elementary School has been the bedrock of public education in its community; the school continues to innovate and redefine public education while staying true to its small-town roots; and

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that we specially recognize and celebrate this milestone achievement in the history of one of the top schools in the State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we commemorate the 150th anniversary of Porter Elementary School,

honor its administration, faculty, staff, and students, both past and present, for their commitment to quality education, and extend our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.