

By: Dutton

H.R. No. 472

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Phillis Wheatley High School in Houston is marking
2 its 90th anniversary in 2017; and

3 WHEREAS, Established in 1927 on Lyons Avenue in the historic
4 Fifth Ward, Wheatley High became one of the nation's largest
5 African American high schools during segregation, with an
6 enrollment of 2,600 and a faculty of 60; the growth of the student
7 population eventually caused the building to become so overcrowded
8 that youngsters had to attend classes in shifts; and

9 WHEREAS, A new facility was completed in 1949 on Market
10 Street, and the \$2.5 million spent on its construction was the most
11 the district had allocated to a campus up to that time; described by
12 the *Houston Chronicle* as one of the finest black schools in the
13 South, it was designed by the architectural firm of MacKie and
14 Kamrath in a style reflecting the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright
15 and featured such amenities as a 1,500-seat auditorium, an
16 industrial arts facility, and a gymnasium and swimming pool; and

17 WHEREAS, In 2006, the mid-century building was replaced by a
18 splendid new structure designed by a Wheatley graduate, noted
19 architect Willie Cleveland Jordan Jr. of the Class of 1956; the
20 school's many other distinguished alumni include two members of the
21 U.S. Congress, Barbara Jordan and Mickey Leland, as well as members
22 of the state legislature, professional athletes, local civic
23 leaders, an Ivy League university president, and musicians Arnett
24 Cobb, Illinois Jacquet, Lester Williams, and Joe Sample; and

1 WHEREAS, The school has benefited from the efforts of many
2 dedicated principals over the years, and that tradition is carried
3 on today by Dr. Shirley Rose-Gilliam; maintaining awareness of the
4 rich traditions of their alma mater, proud graduates are very
5 active in the Phillis Wheatley Metropolitan Alumni and Ex-Students
6 Association; and

7 WHEREAS, Over the course of nine decades, Phillis Wheatley
8 High has provided generations of young Texans with a strong
9 foundation on which to build, and in so doing, it has contributed
10 significantly to the vibrancy and prosperity of the Fifth Ward and
11 the greater Houston area; now, therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas
13 Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby commemorate the 90th
14 anniversary of Phillis Wheatley High School and extend to its
15 students, faculty, staff, and alumni sincere best wishes for
16 continued success; and, be it further

17 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
18 prepared for the school as an expression of high regard by the Texas
19 House of Representatives.