

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 225

**WHEREAS**, The Black History Month celebration at the Texas School for the Deaf on February 24, 2023, provides an ideal opportunity to reflect on the remarkable history of the Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School in Austin; and

**WHEREAS**, Established in 1887 as the Deaf and Dumb and Blind Asylum for Colored Youths, the school was led for 13 years by a man who can truly be called its founding superintendent; educator William H. Holland was born into slavery, fought in the Union Army's Sixteenth United States Colored Troops, and won election to the Texas House of Representatives in 1876; during his term in office, he sponsored the bill establishing Prairie View A&M University; he later successfully petitioned the legislature to create the school for the deaf, mute, and blind; and

**WHEREAS**, The state purchased a 100-acre farm at 4101 Bull Creek Road for the school, which offered instruction in a variety of trades, as well as reading, arithmetic, citizenship, and other subjects; in the 1940s, the state closed the Negro Orphan School in Gilmer and transferred its students to Austin, naming the combined campus the Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School; it moved to 601 Airport Boulevard in 1961, and four years later, it was integrated with the Texas School for the Deaf on South Congress Avenue; the Airport facilities became TSD's East Campus, which hosted early childhood and elementary programs until 1989; and

**WHEREAS**, The Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School benefited from numerous gifted educators over the years, among them principal teacher Eliza Holland, wife of Superintendent Holland, art teacher and historian Mattie White, and its last superintendent, J. C. McAdams; alumni Jack H. Hensley, a Gallaudet University graduate, and Mathew Givens, an evangelist, both went on to teach at the school, and following nearly four decades, Mr. Hensley became a director; the many other notable alumni include gospel music pioneer Arizona Dranes, who helped establish churches across Oklahoma and Texas, and Betty Henderson, a national advocate for the deaf; Azie Taylor Morton, the first Black United States treasurer, attended the school in the early 1950s as the daughter of a deaf single mother; following desegregation, Robert Smith became the first Black graduate of the Texas School for the Deaf, and Clarice Brown became TSD's first Black valedictorian; and

**WHEREAS**, For 78 years, the dedicated faculty of the Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School worked to make the campus a center of Black excellence, providing a quality education that opened pathways of opportunity to their students; now, therefore, be it

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**RESOLVED**, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 88th Legislature, hereby honor the legacy of the Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School.

Eckhardt

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President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the  
above Resolution was adopted by  
the Senate on February 28, 2023.

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Secretary of the Senate

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Member, Texas Senate