

By: Eckhardt

S.R. No. 225

R E S O L U T I O N

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

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

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

24 WHEREAS, The Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School benefited

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

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

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