



House

Joint Resolution 373

By Jim Coley

A RESOLUTION to commemorate the 103rd anniversary of Messick High School in Memphis.

Note: Finished Copies Of This Resolution Were Presented To Classmates/Guests During The Messick High School/Class Of 1970 40-Year Reunion (Saturday, August 7, 2020) At The Litcherman Nature Center – Memphis, TN.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should recognize those exemplary educational institutions that have strengthened our society by producing graduates of the highest caliber who have gone on to excel as responsible and productive citizens; and

WHEREAS, Messick High School was one such exemplary institution, providing a quality education for the children of Memphis and Shelby County from 1909 through 1981, when it was closed; and

WHEREAS, the first consolidated school in Shelby County and one of the oldest, if not the oldest, schools in the county, Messick was originally composed from the elementary schools of Buntyn, Fleece Station, and Avion and was located on the corner of Spotswood and Greer in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, Messick was named in honor of Elizabeth Messick, an enterprising lady who was Shelby County school superintendent from 1904-1908 and who was purportedly the first person to attend the University of Chicago; she was later married to Elmer E. Houk who served as the city editor of *The Commercial Appeal*; and

WHEREAS, Messick gained accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools under the leadership of Principal Ernest C. Ball, who later served as superintendent of Memphis City Schools, and in 1930, Messick changed its status, becoming a city school instead of a county school; and

WHEREAS, during its more than sixty years as a high school, Messick produced distinguished graduates in all professions and walks of life, but was especially noted for the large number of vocalists, musicians, and music industry professionals it graduated; and

WHEREAS, the pantheon of Messick graduates who went on to succeed in music Include: the legendary Steve Cropper and Duck Dunn, the guitarist and bassist, respectively, for the seminal Booker T. and the MGs who were instrumental In crafting the sounds of most of the Stax-Volt roster, including Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, Rufus Thomas, and Wilson Pickett, and who continue to play with some of the greatest artists in popular music; Reggie Young, a gifted guitarist who has played with Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, and Waylon Jennings; Ruth and Betsy Welting and Nancy Tatum, all of whom sang with New York's Metropolitan Opera; Bill Justis and Sid Manker who co-wrote and performed the original version of "Raunchy," a Grammy Hall of Fame song that first used the twangy solo guitar format perfected by Duane Eddy; Ed Bruce, an actor and songwriter who copenned "Mama Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys"; Jimi Jamison, the lead singer for Target, Cobra, and the gold-and-platinum-selling band Survivor, Gary Burbanks, a radio personality and humorist who is a two-time winner of the Marconi Award; Bill Cunningham, bassist for the influential Box Tops who recorded hits such as "The Letter," "Cry Like a Baby," and "Soul Deep"; and his brother, B.B. Cunningham, the organist for the Hombres who had a hit with "Let It Out (Let It All Hang Out)"; and

WHEREAS, although the main building has been torn down, the Messick campus continues to serve a vital educational purpose today as the home of the Memphis Area Adult Education Center, 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 join with the former administrators, faculty, and students of Messick High School in commemorating the 103rd anniversary of Messick, a special place that served as a home away from home for its students and a neighborhood school where quality education was often commingled with musical excellence.

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

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