

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 193

BY REPRESENTATIVE DUPLESSIS

A RESOLUTION

To commend the historic Martinez Kindergarten School on the celebration of its eighty-five-year reunion.

WHEREAS, prior to founding the Martinez Nursery School in 1934, Mildred Bernard Martinez had been forced to resign as a teacher with the New Orleans Public School system after marrying Maurice Martinez, Sr.; at the time, it was illegal for African American teachers to get married while employed by the system; and

WHEREAS, the original site of the Martinez Nursery School was at 5315 LaSalle Street, and it was moved to its North Roman address in 1940; by the 1950s, the name was changed to "Martinez Kindergarten School"; providing education to three-, four-, and five-year-olds, it is said to be the first early education center for children of color in the state; and

WHEREAS, throughout the years, many African American professionals supported the school; among them, Dr. Walter Young, one of very few African American dentists in New Orleans at the time, provided dental care to Martinez students at no cost; C.C. Haydel, Sr., a prominent African American physician, provided the students with free inoculations and medical care that they were denied at doctors' offices due to laws requiring or permitting segregation according to race; and

WHEREAS, the school has been closed since it flooded in Hurricane Katrina, but many community members have the goal of reestablishing the site of the Martinez School; and

WHEREAS, Numa, Maurice and Mildred Martinez's son, a lifetime Seventh Ward resident, owns the property and is currently working on creating community-building programs and revitalizing the site; and

WHEREAS, there are aspirations for the site to house an entrepreneurial and business management support center, a computer lab and technology training center, and a music education center; there are also efforts being made for the school to be added to the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, thousands of children throughout the New Orleans area received their early education from the school and often credit the high academic standards set by Mildred Martinez with starting them on the road to academic success; two notable alumni are serving as co-chairs of the eighty-five-year class reunion, the Honorable Austin Badon and the Honorable Ann D. Duplessis, both former members of the Legislature of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the significance of the Martinez Kindergarten School will forever remain in the hearts and minds of all who attended, taught, and worked at the institution, and it is fitting to extend to them best wishes for a joyous reunion.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the historic Martinez Kindergarten School on the celebration of its eighty-five-year reunion; does hereby recognize and record for posterity the positive impact Maurice and Mildred Martinez made in the academic paths of countless children in the New Orleans area; and does hereby wish every measure of success for all those contributing to the revitalization of the school, for it is a treasure of the Seventh Ward, and should be treated as such.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Numa J. Martinez.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES