

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 993

By Raper

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Helen Anita Sheeler Miller of Bradley County.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should honor the memory of those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person was Helen Anita Sheeler Miller, who was a beloved member of her community and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Helen Miller was born on October 7, 1926, in Charleston and was the only child of Reverend H.A. and Emma Lee Sheeler; and

WHEREAS, she professed her love for the Lord at the tender age of seven and joined Green's Chapel Cumberland Presbyterian Church; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the importance of education from a young age, Mrs. Miller attended High Point Elementary School in Charleston and graduated from J.L. Cook High School in Athens; she attended Alabama State Teachers College in Montgomery, Alabama, and later transferred to Tennessee State University in Nashville, where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Education before graduating with a master's degree at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; and

WHEREAS, Helen Miller's distinguished career in education commenced when she accepted the position of principal of East Etowah Elementary School in Etowah; she later returned to teach at her alma mater, High Point Elementary School; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Miller was subsequently hired by Cleveland City Schools and taught fifth grade at College Hill School until integration, at which time the school was renamed Highland Elementary School and she was appointed principal, in which position she estimably served until the school's closure; and

WHEREAS, Helen Miller held the distinction of being the first female principal in the Cleveland City Schools system as well as the first African-American principal in the school system; and

WHEREAS, after more than thirty-five years as an educator, she concluded her outstanding career at Stuart Elementary School and began her well-deserved retirement; and

WHEREAS, an active member of her profession and her community, Mrs. Miller was a member of the National Education Association, a board member of the Creative Arts Guild and the Bradley Regional Museum, president of the Blue Angels at Cleveland Community Hospital, a lifetime member of the NAACP, and a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and she served on the regional board of the United Negro College Foundation; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to accolades, Helen Miller was named the 2020 Tennessee Citizen of the Year by the U.S. Deputy Sheriff's Association; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Miller was a devout member of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, which she served faithfully for many years; and

WHEREAS, Helen Miller was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, a beloved family matriarch, Mrs. Miller was the proud mother of three children, LeBron (Terrie) Miller, Sophia Phillips, and Angela (Kevin) Thornton; and

WHEREAS, also left to cherish her memory are her grandchildren, Regina Sharp, Joseph Walton, Misty Cranfill, Dion Miller, Dwayne Phillips, Tasha Phillips, Joshua Phillips, and Gabrielle Thornton; sixteen great-grandchildren, three of whom, JaShawn, JaMaya, and Antonio, were blessed to live with her at some point in life; one great-great-grandchild; and a host of cousins, friends, and former students; and

WHEREAS, she was preceded in death by her loving husband of sixty-one years, John H. Miller; son-in-law, Clayborne Phillips; grandchildren, Shannon Smith and Brandon Miller; and one great-grandchild, Isaiah Parris; and

WHEREAS, Helen Miller leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should pay tribute to her bountiful life of purpose and service; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the life and memory of Helen Anita Sheeler Miller, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.