

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1020

By Travis

A RESOLUTION to commemorate the ninety-fifth anniversary of the Lost Boy Scouts and Scout Leader of Troop 45 and memorialize their deaths.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly solemnly remembers eight tragic deaths that occurred on March 23, 1929, and commemorates a selfless episode of heroism that will live forever in the annals of Tennessee history; and

WHEREAS, on March 23, 1929, Scout Master James Tarwater Wright and seven Boy Scouts of Troop 45 of Rockwood died in a flood while camping at a site beside White's Creek Bridge; and

WHEREAS, Colonial Warrior James Tarwater Wright was a charter member of the Society of Colonial Wars of the State of Tennessee in 1923; today, he is remembered as one of the greatest Scout Masters in this country's history; and

WHEREAS, a firsthand account of this tragedy by one of the Scouts who survived was published in *The Historical Review of Rockwood Centennial Year 1868-1968*; and

WHEREAS, the Scouting group of twenty-five left Rockwood on March 22, 1929, for a weekend camping trip at Mr. Tarwater's bungalow, which was situated approximately eight feet above the level of White's Creek; and

WHEREAS, eschewing their usual night watch, the exhausted Scouts fell asleep to a slow, steady rain, but they were awakened at four o'clock the next morning by water pouring through the cabin door; it soon became apparent that wading out through the debris and the swift, deep water was impossible; and

WHEREAS, under Scout Master Wright's calm direction, many of the Scouts climbed onto the roof of the bungalow; however, hours later, the steel highway bridge across White's Creek washed away, releasing a cascading wall of water and debris; and

WHEREAS, the bungalow, now almost submerged, was broken apart and washed away; some Scouts rode roof sections downstream and others clung to treetops until help arrived, but Scout Master Wright and seven of his Scouts perished in the flood; and

WHEREAS, Scout Master Wright was last spotted heroically attempting to rescue a Scout tangled among debris in the raging waters, but he never returned to the surface; and

WHEREAS, at a dedication ceremony in May 1932, the Tennessee Society of Colonial Wars marked the site of the ill-fated cabin encampment and honored one of its brother Warriors, James Tarwater Wright, who died in selfless service to the young men of Troop 45 and whose memory now lies in quiet repose with his beloved Scouts; and

WHEREAS, this monument to Scout Master Wright's courageous actions on that terrible March day is a permanent testament to the imperative of the Scout Oath "to help other people at all times"; and

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2024, a rededication ceremony will be held to commemorate the ninety-fifth anniversary of this tragic event, with national leaders of the General Society of Colonial Wars and Boy Scouts from Harriman Troop 101 and Kingston Troop 106 participating in this special ceremony; 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 on this solemn occasion, we commemorate the ninety-fifth anniversary of the Lost Boy Scouts and Scout Leader of Troop 45 of Rockwood and memorialize the deaths of Scout Master James Tarwater Wright and seven of the Boy Scouts under his charge.

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.