

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 340

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Alfred Williams of Clinton.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Alfred Williams, who, as a high school senior, faced the great responsibility of integrating Clinton High School and blazing a trail for African Americans to gain access to equal education under the law; and

WHEREAS, in the fall of 1956, Mr. Williams and eleven other African-American youths, the Clinton 12, walked down Foley Hill from Green McAdoo School into the all-white Clinton High School for the first time, making history as the first black students at the first public school in the South to be integrated; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Williams and his fellow African-American students showed great courage that day, maintaining their honor and dignity in the face of bigotry and hatred from outside agitators; and

WHEREAS, Alfred Williams and the other members of the Clinton 12 were instrumental in the peaceful integration of Clinton High School, remaining calm but steadfast in the face of violence and intimidation tactics; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Williams later worked for Clinton City Schools and was a friendly presence at Clinton Elementary School, where students fondly called him the "candy man"; and

WHEREAS, the integration of Clinton High School could have been a divisive event in the life of the community, but thanks to Alfred Williams and the Clinton 12's bravery, composure, and perseverance in the face of adversity, peace was restored, and the citizens of Clinton united in support of educational equality and against violence; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Alfred Williams, reflecting fondly upon his legacy as a pioneer in equal educational opportunity for African Americans and a hero of the Civil Rights Movement, and extend our sympathy and condolences to his family.

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