

SENATE RESOLUTION 76

By Oliver

A RESOLUTION to recognize the legacy of Dr. Matthew Walker and the fifty-fifth anniversary of Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center.

WHEREAS, it is our privilege to recognize those venerable medical practitioners and facilities that consistently provide skilled, compassionate care to the citizens of this State; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Matthew Walker made an indelible impact on Nashville, devoting his career to educating a generation of surgeons and serving the medical needs of vulnerable populations; today, fifty-five years after its founding, his namesake healthcare center continues to build on his legacy; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from New Orleans University, now known as Dillard University, Matthew Walker earned his degree from Meharry Medical College in 1934, completing his internship at that institution before receiving advanced training in surgery at Howard University; and

WHEREAS, from 1945 to 1973, Dr. Matthew Walker chaired Meharry's Department of Surgery and developed a rigorous program that cultivated exceptionally trained surgeons; he was a professor of surgery and gynecology from 1944 until his death in 1978; and

WHEREAS, a true trailblazer, Dr. Walker was one of the first African Americans voted into the Nashville Academy of Medicine, and he served on the board of the Hospital Commissioners of Nashville General Hospital; and

WHEREAS, he was also the first African-American Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and, at the time of his death, was credited for training half of the African-American surgeons in the United States; and

WHEREAS, beyond his service as a medical practitioner, Dr. Matthew Walker was a beloved member of his community and active in the Civil Rights Movement and his church; and

WHEREAS, seeing the need for a comprehensive unit due to the overcrowding and understaffing of area clinics and hospitals, Dr. Walker applied for and received funding from the federal government to create the first Federally Qualified Health Center in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in August 1968, the Meharry Neighborhood Health Center opened on Jefferson Street in Nashville; the family-oriented ambulatory health center provided comprehensive health services to the underserved population in one convenient location, helping not only to treat and prevent disease but also to employ persons of low economic and educational backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, the center was named in honor of Dr. Matthew Walker as a testament to his vision of a community health center in North Nashville and his lifetime of service to the Nashville community; and

WHEREAS, Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center (MWCHC) has grown from a single facility to a community staple of medical, dental, nutritional, and behavioral health, all the while remaining an organization dedicated to saving lives and reaching communities; MWCHC now operates three facilities in Nashville, Smyrna, and Clarksville and employs more than 140 healthcare professionals; and

WHEREAS, for fifty-five years, MWCHC has provided high-quality, affordable, comprehensive primary and preventive health care for both insured and uninsured people, delivering value to—and having a significant impact on—America's healthcare system; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor the legacy of Dr. Matthew Walker and congratulate Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center upon the

occasion of its fifty-fifth anniversary, extending our deepest gratitude for the institution's outstanding service to the citizens of Middle Tennessee.

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