**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR AND RECOGNIZE THE LAING MIDDLE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR ITS RICH HISTORY IN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, in the aftermath of the Civil War, Cornelia Hancock, a Quaker and former Union Army nurse, with the financial backing of the Friends Association for the aid and elevation of the Freedmen of Philadelphia, determined to provide a school for children of African descent in Mount Pleasant. The school would later be named for Henry M. Laing, a treasurer of the Friends Association; and

Whereas, on January 29, 1866, in the then war-damaged Presbyterian Church on Hibben Street, the first class of fifty students assembled to learn about citizenship and occupational skills. Among the students were the families of soldiers within United States Colored Troops regiments stationed in Mount Pleasant; and

Whereas, in 1868, Laing School moved from 217 Bennett Street to a brick building constructed by the Freedman’s Bureau on land donated by the Town of Mount Pleasant at the corner of King and Royall Avenue. The school grew to an enrollment of two hundred students and offered seven years of instruction in academic courses and industrial arts; and

Whereas, the earthquake of 1886 destroyed the school, but it was rebuilt and continued on the King and Royall site as Laing Industrial and Normal School, under the administration of the Friends Association, until 1894. The Pennsylvania Abolition Society then served as trustee until 1940, and the school was then deeded to Consolidated School District #5, Charleston County, with a stipulation that the property continue in use forever for the education of children of African descent. Laing was the first accredited black school in the State; and

Whereas, Laing High School, fed by a new Laing Elementary built in the Greenwich neighborhood, expanded the curriculum to twelve years of instruction, before moving to Highway 17 North and Six Mile Road in 1953, to a new building that served as the Laing High School campus until 1970, when it was closed with the desegregation of Charleston County schools; and

Whereas, as a private institution, Laing was the only educational facility available to blacks in Christ Church Parish and the only school for blacks in the county that provided service for eight months for thirty to forty miles; and

Whereas, in addition to the school, the Laing funds supported an industrial complex that provided sewing and cobbling, a home for destitute children, a shelter for the aged, a cottage for teachers, and the Dorcas Room, which provided clothing for the town’s poor; and

Whereas, in 1882, there was not another facility of its kind in the entire state that provided such services for “colored orphans”; and

Whereas, Laing schools and educators have made a profound and sustained contribution to the history and culture of Mount Pleasant, having produced graduates of ability, character, and distinction. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the General Assembly, by this resolution, honor and recognize the Laing Middle School of Science and Technology for its rich history in the State of South Carolina.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the Laing School Association Members.

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