

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2007**

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**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION DRSJR55745-LG-739D\* (5/15)**

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Sponsors:     Senator Graham.

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Referred to:

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1    A JOINT RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF  
2       PUBLIC SCHOOL INTEGRATION IN NORTH CAROLINA.

3           Whereas, the 1954 Brown v. the Board of Education decision of the United  
4 States Supreme Court declared that public schools legally segregated by race were and  
5 are unconstitutional; and

6           Whereas, Brown v. the Board of Education also declared that separate White,  
7 Negro, and Indian schools in North Carolina and other states should be eliminated with  
8 "all deliberate speed"; and

9           Whereas, in response to the Brown decision, officials in North Carolina  
10 debated the issue of public school integration through executive, legislative, judicial,  
11 and constitutional amendment procedures; and

12           Whereas, a special session of the General Assembly was called in the summer  
13 of 1956 to respond to the recommendations of the Pearsall Commission; and

14           Whereas, in September of 1956, a set of constitutional amendment proposals  
15 were approved by the voting citizens of North Carolina, thus substantially inhibiting and  
16 delaying the impact of the Brown decision; and

17           Whereas, local school superintendents Dr. Benjamin Smith, Dr. Elmer  
18 Garinger, and Dr. Craig Phillips worked with school boards and community leaders in  
19 Greensboro, Charlotte, and Winston-Salem to facilitate the era of public school  
20 integration during the summer of 1957; and

21           Whereas, on September 4, 1957, Josephine Boyd (Bradley) at Greensboro  
22 Senior High School along with Brenda Florence, Jimmy Florence, Russell Herring,  
23 Elijah Herring, and Harold Davis at Gillespie Park Elementary School integrated the  
24 previously all-white public schools in Greensboro; and

25           Whereas, on September 4, 1957, Dorothy Counts (Scoggins) at Harding  
26 Senior High School, Gustevas Roberts at Central Senior High School, Girvaud Roberts  
27 (Justice) at Piedmont Junior High School, and Delois Huntley at Alexander Graham  
28 Junior High School integrated the previously all-white public schools in Charlotte; and

1           Whereas, on September 4, 1957, Gwendolyn Bailey (Coleman) integrated the  
2 previously all-white Reynolds High School in Winston-Salem; and

3           Whereas, in the book, Greensboro: A Chosen Center, historian Gayle Fripp  
4 indicates that Gillespie Park Elementary School became the first integrated elementary  
5 school in the southeastern United States; and

6           Whereas, on June 4, 1958, Josephine Boyd (Bradley) of Greensboro Senior  
7 High and Ernest Green of Little Rock (AR) Central High School became the first two  
8 African-American students to graduate from previously all-white high schools in the  
9 South; and

10          Whereas, many different versions of school integration evolved across the  
11 State during the decade of the 1960s; and

12          Whereas, full-scale public school integration finally became the operational  
13 practice for all of North Carolina's public school districts by 1970; and

14          Whereas, monumental progress has been realized in the continuing quest for  
15 equal educational opportunities for North Carolina's school children; and

16          Whereas, 2007-2008 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic 1957-1958  
17 school year; Now, therefore,

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

19           **SECTION 1.** The North Carolina General Assembly wishes to  
20 commemorate the ongoing progress toward equity and to recognize the bravery that was  
21 demonstrated by North Carolinians from multiple ethnic groups a half century ago.

22           **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly honors the memory of Dr. Benjamin  
23 Smith, Dr. Elmer Barringer, Russell Herring, Elijah Herring, Harold Davis, and  
24 Gustevas Roberts for their roles in helping to integrate North Carolina's schools in 1957.

25           **SECTION 3.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this  
26 resolution to the families of the integration pioneers mentioned in this resolution.

27           **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.