

Chapter No. 2083

14/SS02/R734

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***SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 535***

Originated in Senate

Liz Welch

Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 535

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND THE DETERMINATION AND THE EXAMPLE SET BY THE STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATION OF CLARA SCHOOL IN WAYNE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, WHICH WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE IN 2011.

WHEREAS, early in the morning of Sunday, October 28, 2011, Clara School burned to the ground because of a senseless act of vandalism by two juveniles. The main part of the campus was totally destroyed; and

WHEREAS, Clara School had been the oldest school in Wayne County and was at one time called Clara Agricultural High School. At that time, it housed students from throughout the South in dormitories and was considered one of the premier agricultural high schools in the Southeast; and

WHEREAS, the school began as a one-room, one-teacher facility more than a century ago. In 1904, funds were raised to build a new school and a church, and five years later 20 acres of land were donated by W.S. "Uncle Billy" Trigg and plans were finalized

to build the Wayne County Agricultural High School. The first class graduated from that school in 1912; and

WHEREAS, in 1938, the Wayne County School System was formed, and that system took over the assets of the school and campus. In 1946, a bond issue was approved for a new building, and construction was completed on that structure in 1948; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, with the consolidation of all the high schools into Wayne County High School, Clara became a K-8 school; and

WHEREAS, once the school burned on October 28, 2011, the community rallied around the students, teachers, administrators and staff. Area churches offered their facilities to hold class, and school was conducted in the churches across the street from the campus for a number of weeks; and

WHEREAS, students have been attending class in portable trailers and temporary structures while also utilizing some of the structures not damaged by the fire. This has meant students walking across campus for lunch, bus routes and car pick-up routes being drastically changed and a number of other inconveniences hampering the educational opportunities for students; and

WHEREAS, through it all, the students, staff, teachers and administration at Clara School have battled through the adversity, continuing to provide educational excellence for students and the community as a whole. During this period, Clara School improved its School Accountability Rating from a "C" to a "B" and continued

its string of being the highest-rated school in the Wayne County School District; and

WHEREAS, instruction continues in crowded portable buildings and trailers, but the spirit of the Whippets remains strong and true. Students have excelled in the classroom and on the athletic field during this time, and the entire community of Clara, Mississippi, has rallied around the cause; and

WHEREAS, construction has begun on a new facility, more than a year after the fire. Estimates are that construction will take 15 months or longer, meaning students will not be in the new building until the Spring of 2015 at the earliest; and

WHEREAS, it was said at the time of the fire that the Whippets (the school's Mascot) would get their bite back. The Whippets never lost their bite and have used their dogged determination to make the very best out of a situation that was a tragedy; and

WHEREAS, much of the credit should go to Principal Donna Hopkins and Assistant Principal Sandy Graham, but it should also be given to every teacher, staff member, student, parent and community member who has helped the Whippets weather a very bad storm:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize the determination and wonderful example set by the students, teachers and administration of Clara School in

Wayne County, Mississippi, which was destroyed by fire in 2011, and commend their record of achievement and continued educational success through adversity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Principal Donna Hopkins and Assistant Principal Sandy Graham for the school, forwarded to the Wayne County Board of Education and the State Board of Education and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
January 23, 2014



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
January 31, 2014



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES