

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 6011

By Representatives Mays and McKinney

1-28

A RESOLUTION celebrating the 50th anniversary of the United State Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

WHEREAS, On May 17, 1954, in an unanimous order the United States Supreme Court issued its decision overturning the earlier doctrine of "separate but equal" schools in *Plessy v. Ferguson* and declared that "in the field of public education 'Separate but Equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." On May 17, 2004, the 50th anniversary of this decision, the National Park Service will have its grand opening of the new Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site located in the former Monroe School in Topeka; and

WHEREAS, It is indeed ironic that 100 years before this historic decision the Kansas Territory, which became known as Bleeding Kansas because of the struggle which ultimately saw Kansas enter the union as a free state, would be the forum for the integration of African-Americans in our public schools; and

WHEREAS, The Brown case was initiated and organized by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) who recruited African-American parents in Topeka for a class action against the local school board. At that time Topeka had four segregated schools as permitted by state law for cities of more than 15,000 inhabitants. Oliver Brown, pastor of the St. Mark A.M.E. Church in Topeka, was one of the original 13 plaintiffs in the case, and as the only male plaintiff was listed first in the case. The Kansas case was consolidated with four other cases from Delaware, South Carolina, Virginia and the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, Attorneys of note involved in the litigation were Charles Scott, Legal Counsel for the Topeka NAACP, Charles Houston, former Dean of the Howard University School of Law and counsel for the NAACP, and Thurgood Marshall, who was hired by Dean Houston to represent the NAACP and who argued the case before the Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, In 1988 the family of the late Oliver Brown established the Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, Excellence and Research in Topeka. Through the untiring efforts of the members of this organi-

1 zation, and with the support of members of the Kansas legislative dele-
2 gation, the Monroe School was saved from demolition, was purchased by
3 the federal government and in December 1993 was transferred to the
4 National Park Service to be the new Brown v. Board of Education Na-
5 tional Historic Site and the first unit of the National Park Service to be
6 named after a court case: Now, therefore,

7 *Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Kan-*
8 *sas:* That we join with the nation in celebrating the 50th anniversary of
9 the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Edu-*
10 *cation*; and

11 *Be it further resolved:* That the Chief Clerk of the House of Repre-
12 sentatives provide an enrolled copy of this resolution to Cheryl Brown
13 Henderson, President, Brown Foundation, P.O. Box 4862, Topeka, KS
14 66604.

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