

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 1335

By Representatives Brown, Favors, Dean, Floyd, McCormick

A RESOLUTION to name a state building in the City of Chattanooga in honor of Mr. James R. Mapp.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly wishes to name a certain state building in Chattanooga in honor of an outstanding citizen who, in the midst of injustice, oppression, and hostility, possessed the remarkable courage to stand for the noble precepts of equality, justice and freedom upon which our great nation was founded; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James R. Mapp bravely fought for the civil rights and equal treatment of African Americans in the 1950s and 1960s and continues this proud legacy today; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Mapp moved to Chattanooga at the age of ten, where he attended public schools and graduated from Howard High School in 1947; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated and proficient scholar, Mr. Mapp graduated first in his class at Howard High School and later attended A & I College in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, weary of the social injustices against African Americans, James Mapp eagerly pursued various means in which to participate in the civil rights movement, including his service as President of the Chattanooga chapter of the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, it was from this position that Mr. Mapp directed, coordinated, and participated in many peaceful efforts to reconcile the injustices entrenched in the economic, housing, educational, social and political structures in Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, in his wisdom, Mr. Mapp recognized that education was essential for the African American Community of Chattanooga to become liberated economically and socially, and to garner significant political power; and

WHEREAS, James Mapp focused his efforts on obtaining equal educational opportunities for African American students in the Chattanooga Public School System; and

WHEREAS, in 1960, James Mapp decided to attend an informative three day conference, in Nashville, concerning the filing of lawsuits to desegregate public school systems; however, Mr. Mapp did not have the two dollars necessary to stay in a hotel, so he slept in his car behind the Pleasant Baptist Church; each night he earnestly awaited dawn so he could review his copious notes from the previous day's lectures; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Mapp persevered through these economically difficult times to remain true to his vision of a Chattanooga in which African Americans were afforded equal opportunities; and

WHEREAS, after the conference had ended, James Mapp returned home and attempted to convince the Chattanooga Branch of the NAACP and its Board of Directors to file a desegregation lawsuit against the Chattanooga Public School System; and

WHEREAS, his proposal was met with great opposition and the Board of Directors voted not to file a lawsuit; Mr. Mapp, determined to desegregate Chattanooga Schools, convinced two Board members to aid him in the lawsuit; and

WHEREAS, he filed a desegregation lawsuit in April of 1960; this suit lasted a record 26 years, guiding the policies of the Chattanooga Public School Systems and mandating equal opportunities for all students; and

WHEREAS, after the lawsuit was filed, the Mapp family was threatened and harassed to the point that the African American Community had to post guards at the Mapp residence; Mr. Mapp was abandoned by his two petitioners, as they moved from the Chattanooga area; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Mapp was not deterred in his efforts, as he continued to organize and lead protests against the segregated institutions of Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, he organized a protest against segregated lunch counters in Chattanooga in conjunction with the NAACP; however, James Mapp was the only protestor to attend; yet, he did not waver in his commitment to social justice and began to march alone; and

WHEREAS, as Mr. Mapp began his march, hundreds of students from Howard High School, defying the mandates of their instructors, rushed to join the march and effectively closed the business district of Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, he was also a plaintiff-intervenor in the lawsuit that led to the merger of the University of Tennessee-Nashville and Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, despite the threats of personal danger, the dynamiting of his home, and the inconsistent support of the African American Community, James Mapp remained committed to his noble ambition of achieving social justice in Chattanooga and brought effective change to the community; and

WHEREAS, because of his beliefs in justice and equality for all Americans, Mr. Mapp was many times denied employment and social opportunities; despite these terrible hardships, James Mapp continued to courageously fight for social, economic, and political equality for the African American Community of Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, James R. Mapp is still an invaluable member of the Chattanooga community, serving in numerous civic organizations and earning numerous citations; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Mapp has belonged to the NAACP Board of the Chattanooga Chapter longer than any previous Board member; he served as President of the Chattanooga Branch of the NAACP for sixteen years during the 1960s and 1970s and was re-elected in 1987 and served until 1995; he also served two and one-half years as the State President and two years as the Chairman of the Southeast Region and has been bestowed the honor of Life Membership by the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Mapp's remarkable service has led to numerous accolades, including his receipt of the 1965 NAACP Outstanding Achievement Award, the Omega

Psi Phi Citizenship Award, the A.S.A.L.H. Award for the integration of schools, the Zeta Phi Beta Distinguished Service Award, the N.U.L.E.O. Outstanding Community Service Award, the Glenwood Business and Professional Women Club's Outstanding Service Award, National Business League Award for Outstanding Service, the State Conference NAACP Service Award, the NAACP Family of the Year, a commendation by the State of Tennessee, the Brainerd High School PTA Award of Appreciation, the Citizen of the Year Award from the Most Worshipped Prince Hall Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Tennessee, the TVA Society of Minority Employees Service Award, the Unity Group Community Service Award, the Afro-American Heritage Museum Service Award, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Legacy Award, the Unity Group Community Service Award, the 100 Black Men Civil Rights Award, the Tennessee State University Alumni of Chattanooga "Man of Distinction" Award, and was a co-recipient of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Regional "Quality of Life Award" with his late wife Viola Mapp, and the Orchard Knob Baptist Church Loyal Service Award; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chattanooga has acknowledged Mr. Mapp and his family for their outstanding leadership and service to the city; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Black Caucus of the State Legislators has recognized James R. Mapp on numerous occasions and has conferred upon him the prestigious Avon Williams Living Legend Award; and

WHEREAS, he is a faithful member of the Orchard Knob Baptist Church where he has served as an Usher and President of the Sanctuary Choir for more than fifty years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Mapp has committed his entire life to ensuring that all people are afforded equal opportunities and equal treatment under the law. He has served the Chattanooga community with diligence, perseverance, and courage, and exemplifies the characteristics of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that this Body should name a certain state building in Chattanooga to permanently commemorate Mr. Mapp's legendary accomplishments as a civil rights leader, as such building overlooks the very office in which he has worked for many years; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that the Tennessee Client Services Building located at 311 E. Martin Luther King Boulevard in the City of Chattanooga is hereby designated the "James R. Mapp Building" in recognition of a courageous civil rights activist who exemplifies the true spirit of the Volunteer State.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of General Services is directed to erect or affix suitable signs designating the building described in the first resolving clause as the "James R. Mapp Building".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Commissioner of General Services.

ADOPTED: May 21, 2008



JIMMY NAIFEH, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



RON RAMSEY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED: June 4, 2008



PHIL BREDEESEN, GOVERNOR