

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009

S

D

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION DRSJR55323-LG-144 (03/25)

Sponsors: Senator McKissick.

Referred to:

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF JOHN HOPE
2 FRANKLIN, DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR, HISTORIAN, AND CIVIL RIGHTS
3 ACTIVIST.

4 Whereas, John Hope Franklin was born on January 2, 1915, in Rentiesville,
5 Oklahoma, and later moved with his family to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where his father, Buck Colbert
6 Franklin, was a lawyer and his mother, Mollie Parker Franklin, was a schoolteacher; and

7 Whereas, John Hope Franklin graduated magna cum laude from Fisk University in
8 1935 and earned a master's degree in 1936 and doctorate degree in 1941 from Harvard
9 University; and

10 Whereas, between 1936 and 1956, Dr. Franklin taught history at Fisk University, St.
11 Augustine's College, North Carolina College (now North Carolina Central University), and
12 Howard University; and

13 Whereas, in 1956, Dr. Franklin was appointed Chair of the Department of History at
14 Brooklyn College in New York, becoming the first African-American to serve in that position
15 at a predominantly white institution; and

16 Whereas, from 1964 to 1982, Dr. Franklin taught at the University of Chicago,
17 serving as professor of American history, Chair of the Department of History, John Matthews
18 Manly Distinguished Service Professor, and professor emeritus of history; and

19 Whereas, after retiring from the University of Chicago, Dr. Franklin returned to
20 Durham, North Carolina, and in 1982 joined the faculty at Duke University, serving as the first
21 African-American professor to hold an endowed chair, the James B. Duke Professor of History,
22 Professor of Legal History at Duke University Law School, and the James B. Duke Professor of
23 History Emeritus; and

24 Whereas, Dr. Franklin's tenure at Duke University inspired the John Hope Franklin
25 Center for Interdisciplinary and International Studies, the Franklin Humanities Institute, and the
26 John Hope Franklin Research Center; and

27 Whereas, Dr. Franklin also taught briefly at other institutions, including Cambridge
28 University in England, Harvard University, Cornell University, the University of Wisconsin,
29 the University of Hawaii, and the University of California at Berkley; and

30 Whereas, Dr. Franklin authored hundreds of articles and many books, including his
31 most recognized work, "From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans," published
32 in 1947 and considered to be the definitive text on the African-American experience in the
33 United States; and

34 Whereas, some of Dr. Franklin's other books and publications include: "The
35 Emancipation Proclamation;" "The Militant South;" "The Free Negro in North Carolina;"
36 "Reconstruction After the Civil War;" "George Washington Williams: A Biography;" "A
37 Southern Odyssey: Travelers in the Antebellum North;" "Race and History: Selected Essays,



1 1938-1988;" "The Color Line: Legacy for the Twenty-First Century;" "Mirror to America: The
2 Autobiography of John Hope Franklin;" and "My Life and an Era: The Autobiography of Buck
3 Colbert Franklin;" and

4 Whereas, John Hope Franklin was at the forefront of civil rights issues, providing
5 historical research to Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP legal team for the landmark 1954
6 Supreme Court case, Brown Board of Education, which ended the "separate but equal" doctrine
7 in public schools in the United States and marching with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the
8 March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in 1965; and

9 Whereas, Dr. Franklin rendered distinguished service to his profession, serving as
10 President of the American Studies Association, Southern Historical Association, United
11 Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, the Organization of American Historians, and the American
12 Historical Association; and

13 Whereas, Dr. Franklin made significant contributions as a member of several
14 national organizations, including the National Council on the Humanities and the Advisory
15 Commission on Public Diplomacy, and as Chair of the advisory board of President William J.
16 Clinton's Initiative on Race in 1997; and

17 Whereas, during his lifetime, Dr. Franklin received countless honors and awards,
18 including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, in 1995; the
19 John W. Kluge Prize for lifetime achievement in the study of humanities, created by the
20 Library of Congress, in 2006; the Benjamin Franklin Medal for Distinguished Public Service
21 from the American Philosophical Society in 2007; a Gold Medal for distinguished achievement
22 in history from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2002; and more than 130
23 honorary degrees from various colleges and universities; and

24 Whereas, Dr. Franklin also had a passion for orchids and was honored with a
25 species named for him, the *Phalaenopsis John Hope Franklin*; and

26 Whereas, Dr. Franklin was married to his wife, Aurelia Whittington Franklin, a
27 librarian and Goldsboro, North Carolina, native for almost 60 years prior to her death in 1999;
28 and

29 Whereas, Dr. Franklin died on March 25, 2009, at the age of 94; and

30 Whereas, Dr. Franklin is survived by his son, John Whittington Franklin,
31 daughter-in-law, Karen Roberts Franklin, sister-in-law, Bertha W. Gibbs, and cousin, Grant
32 Franklin; Now, therefore,

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

34 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the life of Dr. John Hope Franklin and
35 expresses the appreciation of this State and its citizens for his extraordinary contributions to
36 American history.

37 **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly extends its deepest sympathy to the family of
38 Dr. John Hope Franklin for the loss of a beloved family member.

39 **SECTION 3.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this
40 resolution to the family of Dr. John Hope Franklin.

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