

1 State of Arkansas  
2 86th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2007

SR 21

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5 By: Senators Steele, Brown, Crumbly, Wilkins, Argue

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8 **SENATE RESOLUTION**

9 COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
10 HISTORIC INTEGRATION OF CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL.

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12 **Subtitle**

13 COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF  
14 THE HISTORIC INTEGRATION OF CENTRAL HIGH  
15 SCHOOL.

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18 WHEREAS, September 25, 2007, will mark the 50th anniversary of the  
19 integration of Little Rock's historic Central High School; and

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21 WHEREAS, numerous local and national events are planned through late  
22 September 2007, including a festival and a series of educational and judicial  
23 forums, culminating with a ceremony on the front lawn of Central High School  
24 on September 25, 2007; and

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26 WHEREAS, dozens of organizations and institutions, including the  
27 National Park Service Central High National Historic Site, Arkansas Repertory  
28 Theatre, Central Arkansas Library System, UALR William H. Bowen School of  
29 Law, the Clinton School of Public Service, and the William J. Clinton  
30 Presidential Center and Park will be participating in the commemoration  
31 through their own events; and

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33 WHEREAS, on the morning of September 23, 1957, nine African-American  
34 teenagers now commonly and affectionately known as the "Little Rock Nine"  
35 held the line against an angry mob protesting integration in front of Little  
36 Rock's Central High School; and



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WHEREAS, as the students met their new classmates for the first time inside the school, violence escalated outside, and the Little Rock police removed the Little Rock Nine from the school for their safety. The next day President Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered the United States Army's 101st Airborne Division into Little Rock to escort the nine (9) students into Central High School, and each student was assigned his or her own guard; and

WHEREAS, one of the Little Rock Nine later remembered, "After three full days inside Central, I knew that integration is a much bigger word than I thought."; and

WHEREAS, the integration of Central High School was broadcast across the nation and the world; was the site of the first important test for the implementation of the United States Supreme Court's historic decision in the case of Brown v. Board of Education in 1954; became the epitome of state resistance to desegregation when Governor Orval Faubus directly questioned the authority of the federal court system and the validity of desegregation; and forced the nation to resolve to enforce African-American civil rights in the face of massive southern defiance during the years following the Brown v. Board of Education decision; and

WHEREAS, the members of the 50th Anniversary Commission are Co-chair Virgil Miller, Co-chair Nancy Rousseau, Annie Abrams, Dr. Edith Altheimer, Ralph Brodie, Sen. Irma Hunter Brown, Shannon Butler, Dale Charles, Cynthia East, Ashley Fisher, Dr. Andrew Guerrero, Schawnee Hightower, Carlotta Walls LaNier, Rep. Wilhelmina Lewellen, Mike Madell, Dr. Kathryn Mitchell, Blake Rutherford, Derrick Smith, Sen. Tracy Steele, Minnijean Brown Trickey, Darrin Williams, and Reginald Wright; and

WHEREAS, the Little Rock Nine should be commended individually for their courage, determination, and significant roles in the civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, Minnijean Brown was born September 11, 1941, in Little Rock and entered Central High School at the age of sixteen (16). Although all of

1 the Little Rock Nine experienced verbal and physical harassment during the  
2 1957-1958 school year at Central, Minnijean Brown was the first suspended and  
3 later expelled for retaliating against the daily torment; She moved to New  
4 York in February, 1958, and lived with Doctors Kenneth B. and Mamie Clark,  
5 both African-American psychologists. Minnijean Brown graduated from New  
6 York's New Lincoln High School in 1959 and attended Southern Illinois  
7 University, majoring in journalism. She later moved to Canada where she  
8 received a Bachelor of Social Work in Native Human Services from Laurentian  
9 University and a Master of Social Work from Carleton University in Ontario,  
10 Canada. Minnijean Brown is a social activist and has worked on behalf of  
11 peacemaking, environmental issues, developing youth leadership, diversity  
12 education and training, cross-cultural communication, and gender and social  
13 justice advocacy. She served in the Clinton Administration as Deputy  
14 Assistant Secretary for Workforce Diversity at the United States Department  
15 of the Interior from 1999 to 2001. Brown has taught social work at Carleton  
16 University and in various community colleges in Canada and is the recipient  
17 of numerous awards for her community work for social justice, including the  
18 Lifetime Achievement Tribute by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and  
19 the International Wolf Award for contributions to racial harmony; and

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21 WHEREAS, the image of fifteen-year-old Elizabeth Eckford walking alone  
22 through a screaming mob in front of Central High School propelled the  
23 integration crisis into the nation's living rooms and brought international  
24 attention to Little Rock. Elizabeth Eckford was born on October 4, 1941, and  
25 is one (1) of six (6) children. On September 4, 1957, Eckford arrived at  
26 Central High School alone, got off the bus one (1) block from the school, and  
27 tried to enter the campus but was turned away by Arkansas National Guard  
28 troops. She then confronted an angry mob of people opposing integration,  
29 chanting, "Two, four, six, eight, we ain't gonna integrate." As she made her  
30 way down the block, Eckford attempted two (2) more times to enter the school  
31 campus but was blocked by the guardsmen, who were there under orders from the  
32 Governor to keep the black students out. Eckford made her way through the mob  
33 and sat on a bus bench at the end of the block. She was eventually able to  
34 board a city bus and went to her mother's job at the Arkansas School for the  
35 Deaf. Because all of the city's high schools were closed the following year,  
36 Eckford did not graduate from Central High School. She joined the United

1 States Army and was able to earn her general equivalency diploma and returned  
2 to Little Rock in the 1960s to be closer to her parents. She attended Central  
3 State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. Eckford is an Army veteran and has  
4 taken jobs in a variety of settings throughout her life as a waitress, a  
5 history teacher, a welfare worker, an unemployment and employment  
6 interviewer, and a military reporter; and

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8 WHEREAS, Ernest Green was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on September  
9 22, 1941. Green made history as the only senior among the Little Rock Nine.  
10 His place in Arkansas' civil rights history was solidified when he persevered  
11 through a year of daily harassment by some of his fellow students to become  
12 the first African-American Central High graduate on May 25, 1958. Sitting with  
13 Green's family at the event was the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who  
14 attended the graduation virtually unnoticed. An active member of the  
15 community from an early age, Green regularly attended church. He was involved  
16 in the Boy Scouts and eventually became an Eagle Scout. He was a student at  
17 Horace Mann High School before volunteering to integrate the all-white  
18 Central High School. After graduating from high school, Green attended  
19 Michigan State University, earning a bachelor's degree in 1962 and a master's  
20 degree in sociology in 1964. Afterwards, he served as the director for the A.  
21 Phillip Randolph Education Fund from 1968 to 1977. He then was appointed the  
22 Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Affairs during President Jimmy  
23 Carter's administration from 1977 to 1981. Currently, Green is Managing  
24 Director at Lehman Brothers in Washington, D.C. and has been with the company  
25 since 1987. He has served on numerous boards, such as the National  
26 Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Winthrop  
27 Rockefeller Foundation. Green is married with three (3) children. In 1992,  
28 Disney produced a television special, The Ernest Green Story, which is still  
29 popular today for students of all ages and used in classrooms around the  
30 world to teach about the Little Rock Nine; and

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32 WHEREAS, Thelma Mothershed Wair was born in 1940 in Bloomberg, Texas.  
33 Wair attended Dunbar Junior High School and Horace Mann High School before  
34 transferring to Central. Despite daily torment from white students at  
35 Central, she completed her junior year at the formerly all-white high school  
36 during the tumultuous 1957-58 year. Because the city's high schools were

1 closed the following year, Wair earned the necessary credits for graduation  
2 through correspondence courses and by attending summer school in St. Louis,  
3 Missouri. She received her diploma from Central High School by mail. Thelma  
4 Mothershed Wair graduated from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, in  
5 1964 and earned her master's degree in Guidance and Counseling, as well as an  
6 Administrative Certificate in Education from Southern Illinois University,  
7 Edwardsville. Wair taught home economics in the East St. Louis school system  
8 for twenty-eight (28) years before retiring in 1994. Wair has also worked at  
9 the St. Clair County Jail, Juvenile Detention Center in St. Clair County,  
10 Illinois, and was an instructor of survival skills for women at the American  
11 Red Cross Shelter for the homeless. During the 1989-1990 school year, she was  
12 honored as an Outstanding Role Model by the East St. Louis chapter of the Top  
13 Ladies of Distinction and the Early Childhood-Pre-Kindergarten staff of  
14 District 189. Wair and her late husband have one (1) son; and  
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16 WHEREAS, Melba Pattillo Beals was born on December 7, 1941, in Little  
17 Rock, Arkansas. She later recounted her experience at Central High School in  
18 her book Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle To Desegregate  
19 Little Rock's Central High School. Beals grew up surrounded by family members  
20 who knew the importance of an education. Her mother, Lois, had been one of  
21 the first African-Americans to graduate from the University of Arkansas in  
22 1954. At Central, Beals faced daily harassment from white students and as  
23 Beals later recounted, the soldier assigned to protect her instructed, "In  
24 order to get through this year, you will have to become a soldier. Never let  
25 your enemy know what you are feeling." Beals took the soldier's advice and  
26 finished the school year. Barred from entering Central High School the  
27 following year when the city's schools were closed, Beals moved to Santa  
28 Rosa, California, for her senior year of high school. Beals graduated from  
29 San Francisco State University with a bachelor's degree. She earned a  
30 graduate degree in communications from Columbia University, worked as a  
31 reporter for NBC, and has served as a communications consultant. Beals is  
32 also the only one (1) of the Little Rock Nine to have written a book based on  
33 her experiences at Central High School. Published in 1995, the book is a  
34 first-hand account of the trials and tribulations that Beals and the other  
35 eight (8) students encountered from segregationists and racist students. The  
36 book was named the ALA Notable Book for 1995 and won the Robert F. Kennedy

1 Book Award that same year. She has also written White is a State of Mind,  
2 published in 1999, which follows Beals from her senior year in high school to  
3 her college and family days in California and serves as a sequel to Warriors  
4 Don't Cry. Beals has three (3) children; and  
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7 WHEREAS, Carlotta Walls LaNier, the oldest of three (3) daughters, was  
8 born on December 18, 1942, in Little Rock, Arkansas. LaNier made history as  
9 the youngest member of the Little Rock Nine. Inspired by Rosa Parks, she had  
10 a desire to get the best education available by enrolling in Central High  
11 School. White students called her names and spat on her while armed guards  
12 escorted her to classes, but LaNier concentrated on her studies and protected  
13 herself throughout the school year. LaNier was prevented from attending  
14 Central the next year when the Little Rock high schools were closed, but she  
15 returned to Central High and graduated in 1960. LaNier attended Michigan  
16 State University for two years before moving with her family to Denver. In  
17 1968, she earned a Bachelor of Science from Colorado State College now the  
18 University of Northern Colorado, and began working at the YWCA as a program  
19 administrator for teenagers. In 1977, she founded LaNier and Company, a real  
20 estate brokerage firm. Her experience in real estate includes everything from  
21 constructing and remodeling properties to marketing and selling them. LaNier  
22 is currently the president of the Little Rock Nine Foundation, a scholarship  
23 organization dedicated to ensuring equal access to education for African-  
24 Americans. She has also served as a trustee for the Iliff School of Theology.  
25 LaNier and her husband, Ira "Ike" LaNier, have two (2) grown children; and  
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27 WHEREAS, Terrence Roberts was born December 3, 1941, in Little Rock,  
28 Arkansas. Roberts was a sophomore at Horace Mann High School when he  
29 volunteered to integrate Little Rock's Central High School. When the city's  
30 high schools were closed to prevent further desegregation, Roberts moved to  
31 Los Angeles, California, and graduated from Los Angeles High School in 1959.  
32 Following his graduation from high school, Roberts attended California State  
33 University and was awarded a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1967. He went  
34 on to attend graduate school at the University of California at Los Angeles  
35 and received a master's degree in social welfare in 1970. In 1976, Roberts  
36 was awarded a Ph.D. in psychology from Southern Illinois University.

1 Following his graduation from SIU, Roberts moved to the Napa Valley and  
2 directed the mental health unit of St. Helena Hospital in Deer Park,  
3 California, for ten (10) years before accepting an invitation to join the  
4 UCLA School of Social Welfare as assistant dean. In 1994, he took a position  
5 of department chair of the psychology program at Antioch University, Los  
6 Angeles. As demands on his time increased, Roberts became program co-chair to  
7 concentrate on the activities of his management consulting firm. Currently,  
8 he is a faculty member at Antioch and a widely sought-after speaker and  
9 consultant. Roberts serves on the boards of the Economic Resources Center in  
10 Southern California, Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena, Eisenhower World  
11 Affairs Institute, and Little Rock Nine Foundation. He and his wife have two  
12 (2) adult daughters and one (1) grandson; and  
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14 WHEREAS, Jefferson Thomas was born in 1942 in Little Rock, Arkansas. A  
15 quiet young man with a sense of humor, Thomas was a track athlete at Horace  
16 Mann High School when he chose to volunteer to integrate all-white Central  
17 High School for the 1957-58 school year as a sophomore. The Nine were  
18 harassed daily by white students, and Thomas' quiet demeanor made him a  
19 target for bullies at the school. He graduated from Central High School in  
20 1960 and eventually became an accountant for the United States Department of  
21 Defense. Thomas is now retired; and  
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23 WHEREAS, Gloria Cecelia Ray was born September 26, 1942, in Little  
24 Rock. She was the third child of H.C. Ray, Sr. and Julia Miller Ray. Mr. Ray  
25 was already a retired federal employee when Gloria entered Central High. H.C.  
26 Ray, Sr. had founded the Arkansas Agricultural Extension Service for Negroes  
27 under the auspices of the United States Department of Agriculture and had  
28 studied and worked for none other than the distinguished George Washington  
29 Carver and Booker T. Washington before graduating from Tuskegee Institute.  
30 These facts strongly influenced Gloria Ray's choice to attend Central High  
31 School. She was fourteen (14) years of age when she finished Dunbar Junior  
32 High School and registered to attend Central for her sophomore year. Ray, like  
33 the others of the Nine, was tormented by certain white students who called  
34 her names, threw things at her, spit at her, vandalized her locker, and even  
35 pushed her down a flight of stairs. Still, like the others, she was  
36 determined to finish the year. Her mother, a woman with two (2) university

1 degrees and a sociologist working for the State of Arkansas, was fired by  
2 Governor Faubus when she refused to withdraw Ray from Central High. The  
3 following year when all public high schools in Little Rock remained closed,  
4 Ray moved to Missouri, where her mother had been able to find employment, and  
5 attended the newly integrated Kansas City Central High School. After high  
6 school graduation, she attended the Illinois Institute of Technology in  
7 Chicago. She graduated in 1965 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and  
8 mathematics. Immediately after graduation Gloria Ray worked briefly as a  
9 public school teacher and a laboratory research assistant at the University  
10 of Chicago Research Medical Center. In 1966, Gloria Ray married Krister  
11 Karlmark, a professor at the Institute of Design in Chicago, Illinois, and an  
12 industrial designer. The same year, she joined the Illinois Institute of  
13 Technology's Research Institute as Assistant Mathematician on the APT IV  
14 (robotics) project, which included work at Boeing in Seattle, McDonnell-  
15 Douglas in Santa Monica and NASA Automation Center in St. Louis. In 1970,  
16 Gloria Ray Karlmark joined IBM Nordic Laboratory in Sweden, working as a  
17 system analyst/technical writer. After graduating as patent attorney from  
18 Kungliga Patent & Registreringsverket in Stockholm, 1977, Ray Karlmark worked  
19 for IBM International Patent Operations as European Patent Attorney until  
20 1981, when she moved to Belgium and began working for N.V. Philips  
21 Gloeilampenfabrieken as CAD/CAM and Technical Product Documentation  
22 Specialist. From 1976 to 1994, Ray Karlmark founded and served as Editor-in-  
23 Chief of Computers in Industry, an international journal of practice and  
24 experience of computer applications in industry. From 1982 to 1994, she  
25 entered into early retirement before going back to work in the Netherlands,  
26 first for Philips Telecommunications in Hilversum and later for Philips  
27 Lighting in Eindhoven. Gloria and Krister Karlmark have two (2) children: a  
28 son, Mats Karlmark, born in Sweden in 1972, and a daughter, Elin Karlmark,  
29 born in Sweden in 1974; and

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31 WHEREAS, as astutely put by Earnest Green, "We kids [integrated Central  
32 High School] mainly because we didn't know any better, but our parents were  
33 willing to put their careers and their homes on the line"; and

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35 WHEREAS, the trials and tribulations of the Little Rock Nine and their  
36 families should always be remembered as beacons of strength in the face of



1 overwhelming odds, dignity in the face of adversity, courage in the face of  
2 hostility, and perserverence for the betterment of their fellow man and the  
3 ultimate success of the civil rights movement,

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5 NOW THEREFORE,

6 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE  
7 STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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9 THAT the Senate of the Eighty-Sixth General Assembly of the State of  
10 Arkansas respectfully commemorates the 50th anniversary of the historic  
11 integration of Central High School and honors the achievements of the Little  
12 Rock Nine and their families.

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