

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 66

Session of
2009

INTRODUCED BY BOYLE, M. O'BRIEN, JOSEPHS, McCALL, STURLA, MANN, DeLUCA, BEAR, BELFANTI, BOYD, BRENNAN, PICKETT, PHILLIPS, PETRI, PAYTON, BROWN, D. COSTA, DONATUCCI, GEORGE, GRUCELA, HESS, KIRKLAND, KORTZ, MANDERINO, McGEEHAN, McILVAINE SMITH, MELIO, MILLARD, MURPHY, PALLONE, PARKER, PASHINSKI, PAYNE, QUINN, READSHAW, ROEBUCK, SAINATO, SIPTROTH, K. SMITH, SWANGER, J. TAYLOR, VULAKOVICH, WALKO AND WATSON,
FEBRUARY 10, 2009

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
FEBRUARY 10, 2009

A RESOLUTION

1 Congratulating the owners and supporters of the historic Walnut
2 Street Theatre, located in Philadelphia, as they celebrate
3 the 200th anniversary of the theater's opening.

4 WHEREAS, The Walnut Street Theatre is the oldest theater in
5 the United States and is celebrating the 200th anniversary of
6 its opening; and

7 WHEREAS, Originally opened as The New Circus featuring
8 equestrian acts in 1809, a stage and pit for theatrical
9 performances was added in 1811 and the new theater's name was
10 changed to the Olympic; and

11 WHEREAS, President Thomas Jefferson and the Marquis de
12 Lafayette attended the theater's first production on opening
13 night; and

14 WHEREAS, The theater's name was changed to the Walnut Street
15 Theatre in 1820; and

1 WHEREAS, The Walnut Street Theatre's famous firsts include
2 being the first theater to install gas footlights and air
3 conditioning, sourcing the first copyright law to protect
4 American plays and having the first curtain call, which is now a
5 tradition in every theater; and

6 WHEREAS, Appearing on stage at the Walnut Street Theatre have
7 been many of the most prominent actors of the 19th and 20th
8 centuries, in some of the early productions of plays that would
9 later become American classics; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1964 the theater was designated a National
11 Historic Landmark; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1969 a multimillion dollar "Grand Restoration"
13 was begun, leading to the Walnut Street Theatre's reopening in
14 1971 as a performing arts center, presenting theater, opera,
15 dance, music and film; and

16 WHEREAS, The Walnut Street Theatre School was established in
17 1984, which today has an enrollment of more than 1,200 students
18 annually; and

19 WHEREAS, The Walnut Street Theatre is noteworthy for having
20 the most subscribers of any regional theater in the world, with
21 more than 56,000 annual subscriptions; and

22 WHEREAS, The Walnut Street Theatre is the most active theater
23 company in the region, featuring more than 20 productions, 600
24 performances and 350,000 attendees each season, while offering
25 education and outreach programs that reach more than 110,000
26 students and their families each year; therefore be it

27 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives congratulate the
28 Walnut Street Theatre owners and supporters on the 200th
29 anniversary of its opening and wish them many more years of
30 distinguished success; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the
2 great historical significance of the Walnut Street Theatre in
3 the history of American theater and theater worldwide; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the
6 many artistic and educational contributions the Walnut Street
7 Theatre has made to enrich the lives of the citizens of the
8 greater Philadelphia community.