
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 534 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY BISHOP, READSHAW, HENNESSEY, YOUNGBLOOD, COHEN,
THOMAS, KIRKLAND, SIMS, DIGIROLAMO, VEREB, KINSEY, ROZZI,
MILLARD, MARSICO, DRISCOLL, CALTAGIRONE, C. PARKER, FARINA,
GROVE, KIM, SCHWEYER, McNEILL, MAHONEY, MURT, BULLOCK AND
BRADFORD, OCTOBER 8, 2015

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
OCTOBER 8, 2015

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the outstanding contributions and achievements of
2 Julian Abele, an accomplished architect and Philadelphia
3 resident.

4 WHEREAS, Julian Francis Abele, the first African-American
5 graduate of the architecture program at the University of
6 Pennsylvania, received scant recognition during his lifetime
7 despite his many significant professional contributions; and

8 WHEREAS, Although Fiske Kimball, noted architectural
9 historian and director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art,
10 acknowledged that Abele was one of the most sensitive designers
11 anywhere in America in 1942, Abele remained virtually unknown
12 outside Philadelphia's architectural community until the 1970s
13 and 1980s; and

14 WHEREAS, Born in Philadelphia in 1881, Abele lived most of
15 his life in the city, residing at 1515 Christian Street for
16 several decades of his adult life; and

1 WHEREAS, An accomplished student, Abele graduated from the
2 Philadelphia Museum and School of Industrial Art in 1898 and
3 entered the prestigious architecture program at the University
4 of Pennsylvania that same year, where he won several impressive
5 awards and served as president of the university's Architectural
6 Society during his senior year; and

7 WHEREAS, After graduating from Penn in 1902, Abele augmented
8 his education by studying architectural design at the
9 Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts while working evenings for
10 the noted Philadelphia architect Louis C. Hickman; and

11 WHEREAS, Abele spent the next few years studying design in
12 Paris and was influenced by 18th century French architecture
13 throughout his career; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1906, Abele returned to Philadelphia and joined
15 the firm of Horace Trumbauer, a popular architectural design
16 house that was responsible for many mansions in Philadelphia,
17 New York and Newport, Rhode Island, as well as apartment houses,
18 offices, school buildings, theaters, hospitals, clubhouses,
19 churches, libraries and museums; and

20 WHEREAS, One of Abele's largest projects was the firm's
21 commission to design and supervise the construction of the
22 Philadelphia Museum of Art; and

23 WHEREAS, In 1909, he ascended to the firm's top position,
24 chief designer, a remarkable accomplishment in light of his
25 young age and race and he continued to be the top designer of
26 the Trumbauer firm until his death in 1950; and

27 WHEREAS, He designed the Duke University Chapel, as well as
28 many other buildings on the campus; and

29 WHEREAS, In 1942, Abele was elected to the American Institute
30 of Architects; and

1 WHEREAS, In his private life, Abele was a quiet, serious man,
2 yet brilliant and witty, who appreciated all things French,
3 enjoying fine wine, classical music and opera, and who engaged
4 in watercolor painting, sketching and jewelry and furniture
5 making; and

6 WHEREAS, He married Marguerite Bulle, a French woman, and had
7 two children, a son and a daughter, but after several years the
8 couple parted although they never divorced; and

9 WHEREAS, Today, we appreciate Abele as one of the early 20th
10 century's most adept designers of revival buildings, who
11 rejuvenated many long-dormant styles as vital, modern forms of
12 architectural expression and changed the skyline of Philadelphia
13 and much of the United States; therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the
15 outstanding contributions and achievements of Julian Abele, an
16 accomplished architect and Philadelphia resident.