

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 230 Session of
2002

INTRODUCED BY TOMLINSON, KITCHEN, THOMPSON, STACK, ERICKSON,
LOGAN, TARTAGLIONE, KUKOVICH, COSTA, PUNT, ARMSTRONG, ORIE,
CONTI, M. WHITE, STOUT, FUMO, HELFRICK, BRIGHTBILL AND BELL,
MAY 3, 2002

REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, MAY 3, 2002

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring in memoriam Stephen Girard as an exemplary merchant,
2 mariner, banker, philanthropist, humanitarian, patriot,
3 founder of Girard College in Philadelphia and a great
4 Philadelphian, Pennsylvanian and American.

5 WHEREAS, On May 20, 1750, Stephen Girard was born in
6 Bordeaux, France; and

7 WHEREAS, As a young man, Girard became a captain of a
8 merchant ship and learned to trade with merchants in the New
9 World; and

10 WHEREAS, In May 1776 a blockade required Girard to divert
11 course from New York City to Philadelphia where he eventually
12 took up residence; and

13 WHEREAS, During the Revolutionary War, Girard embraced the
14 American bid for liberty and became a prosperous businessman;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, By 1781 Girard was a maritime entrepreneur of
17 extraordinary dimensions; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1793 a horrible yellow fever epidemic struck the

1 City of Philadelphia. While prominent citizens fled the city,
2 Girard remained to establish a hospital at the Bush Mansion. At
3 his expense, he cared for the sick and afforded dignified burial
4 for those who perished; and

5 WHEREAS, In 1811 Girard became the largest shareholder in the
6 first national bank chartered by the Congress of the United
7 States, and he was a most powerful banker; and

8 WHEREAS, The following year he took over the bank and renamed
9 it the Girard Bank; and

10 WHEREAS, During the War of 1812 the United States Treasury
11 ran out of money, and Girard was the only person with the
12 necessary cash to make the Treasury solvent again, providing a
13 personal loan in excess of \$7,000,000 to the United States
14 Treasury to successfully conclude the war; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1829 the State of Pennsylvania had run out of
16 money. At the request of Pennsylvania Governor John Shulze in
17 1829, Stephen Girard provided a loan of \$100,000 to the
18 Pennsylvania State Treasury with no guarantee of repayment; and

19 WHEREAS, When Girard died of influenza on December 26, 1831,
20 he had gained the admiration of the citizens of Philadelphia for
21 his many selfless expressions of humanitarian concern. The City
22 of Philadelphia declared four days of mourning as thousands
23 lined the streets to honor Stephen Girard as its outstanding
24 citizen; and

25 WHEREAS, Many charitable groups benefited from Girard's
26 benevolence through his lifetime and through his estate; and

27 WHEREAS, Girard's last will and testament provided millions
28 of dollars for the establishment of a college, to be known as
29 Girard College, for orphaned children; and

30 WHEREAS, The gift of Girard College is a gesture that stands

1 alone in the educational history of the United States and is
2 unique in the magnitude of the gesture Girard made to others;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, Girard College, located in the northern part of the
5 City of Philadelphia, opened its doors to students on January 1,
6 1848; and

7 WHEREAS, Today, children from poor families attend the
8 college, and about 80% graduate and go on to higher education;
9 therefore be it

10 RESOLVED, That the Senate honor in memoriam Stephen Girard as
11 an exemplary merchant, mariner, banker, philanthropist,
12 humanitarian, patriot, founder of Girard College in Philadelphia
13 and a great Philadelphian, Pennsylvanian and American.