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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 791 Session of  
2008

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INTRODUCED BY CONKLIN, DONATUCCI, JAMES, PYLE, WANSACZ, BRENNAN,  
GEORGE, MENSCH, BAKER, DALEY, SOLOBAY, RUBLEY, HESS, MAHONEY,  
SWANGER, CLYMER, SEIP, CALTAGIRONE, BEAR, KULA, HANNA,  
MILLARD, PARKER, GOODMAN, KORTZ, VULAKOVICH, YOUNGBLOOD,  
HERSHEY, SIPTROTH, K. SMITH, THOMAS, SAINATO, GIBBONS,  
WOJNAROSKI, SANTONI, GRUCELA, KIRKLAND, SAYLOR, QUINN,  
SCAVELLO, PALLONE, READSHAW, MOYER, O'NEILL AND PHILLIPS,  
JUNE 18, 2008

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
JUNE 18, 2008

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A RESOLUTION

1 Memorializing Dr. James Naismith.

2 WHEREAS, Dr. James Naismith, who wanted to create a game of  
3 skill instead of one that relied solely on strength, invented  
4 the Game of Basketball at the Young Men's Christian Association  
5 (YMCA) in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1891; and

6 WHEREAS, Prior to inventing the game, he was both an athlete  
7 and a scholar, excelling in lacrosse, rugby and gymnastics,  
8 while earning a medical degree with a primary interest in sports  
9 physiology and becoming a Presbyterian minister with a keen  
10 interest in philosophy and healthy living; and

11 WHEREAS, To the dismay of his instructors and colleagues, Dr.  
12 Naismith continued his involvement with sports after graduation  
13 and ignored their advice that he leave the athletic life behind  
14 to devote himself to books and other Christian pursuits; and

1       WHEREAS, This fresh perspective on the role of athletics in  
2 life led him to the YMCA in 1890; and

3       WHEREAS, Not long after inventing the game of basketball, Dr.  
4 Naismith moved to the University of Kansas in 1898, where he  
5 became a professor of physical education and an athletic  
6 director and introduced the game of basketball and became the  
7 school's first head basketball coach; and

8       WHEREAS, The Canadian-born doctor later served twice in  
9 military conflict, including in France during World War I, and  
10 eventually became a United States citizen in 1925; and

11       WHEREAS, Dr. Naismith's gift of the game of basketball was  
12 then added as an Olympic sport at the 1936 Berlin games, during  
13 which, as a tribute to him, he tossed the first ball for the  
14 first game; and

15       WHEREAS, Only three years after this crowning achievement,  
16 Dr. Naismith died from a heart attack, leaving behind five  
17 children and many grandchildren; and

18       WHEREAS, Dr. Naismith is a member of the Naismith Memorial  
19 Basketball Hall of Fame, the International Basketball Hall of  
20 Fame, the Canadian Basketball Hall of Fame, the Canadian Olympic  
21 Hall of Fame, the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame, the Ontario  
22 Sports Legends Hall of Fame, the Ottawa Sports Hall of Fame, the  
23 McGill University Sports Hall of Fame and the Kansas Sports Hall  
24 of Fame; and

25       WHEREAS, The communities of Springfield, Massachusetts, and  
26 Lawrence, Kansas, honor the memory of Dr. Naismith with streets  
27 and buildings that bear his name; and

28       WHEREAS, Most individuals involved in basketball acknowledge  
29 that his is the greatest coaching legacy in basketball history,  
30 one that continues to grow and influence the sport today; and

1       WHEREAS, Dr. Naismith coached Forrest "Phog" Allen, his  
2 successor at the University of Kansas, who went on to become one  
3 of the most successful coaches in college basketball history,  
4 and he coached Adolph Rupp and Dean Smith, two more of the most  
5 successful college basketball coaches, who won a combined total  
6 of six National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) national  
7 championships; and

8       WHEREAS, Adolph Rupp coached Pat Riley, one of the greatest  
9 coaches in National Basketball Association (NBA) history, who  
10 coached five NBA championship teams; and

11       WHEREAS, Dean Smith coach Larry Brown, who won an NCAA  
12 national championship with the University of Kansas in 1988 and  
13 an NBA championship with the Detroit Pistons in 2004, Roy  
14 Williams, who won an NCAA national championship with the  
15 University of North Carolina in 2005, and Michael Jordan,  
16 arguably the greatest basketball player in history; and

17       WHEREAS, The countless number of basketball hoops and nets  
18 affixed to garages, barns and poles in driveways, yards and  
19 streets and affixed in playgrounds, gymnasiums and stadiums  
20 around the world will serve as a constant reminder to future  
21 generations of the great legacy of Dr. Naismith; therefore be it

22       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives memorialize Dr.  
23 James Naismith, the inventor of the Game of Basketball, a  
24 successful scholar and athlete and the owner of the greatest  
25 coaching legacy in the sport's history; and be it further

26       RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to  
27 Stewart Naismith, grandson of Dr. James Naismith, at 23  
28 Riverview Road, Binghamton, New York 13901.