
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 475 Session of
2011

INTRODUCED BY V. BROWN, KORTZ, CALTAGIRONE, BRADFORD, COHEN,
EVERETT, YOUNGBLOOD, MURT, FABRIZIO, GEORGE, HENNESSEY,
JOHNSON, KIRKLAND, MAHONEY, MANN, MILLARD, MOUL, M. O'BRIEN,
PAYTON, ROEBUCK, SWANGER, VEREB AND WATSON, OCTOBER 24, 2011

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, OCTOBER
24, 2011

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring the educational and professional achievements of Dr.
2 Constance E. Clayton, the first African American and the
3 first woman superintendent of the School District of
4 Philadelphia.

5 WHEREAS, Constance Clayton was born in 1937 in Philadelphia,
6 Pennsylvania, the only child born to Levi Clayton, a plumber,
7 and Willabell Harris Clayton, a social worker; and

8 WHEREAS, When Dr. Clayton was two years of age, her parents
9 divorced, leaving her to be raised by her mother and
10 grandmother; and

11 WHEREAS, Dr. Clayton attended Paul Lawrence Dunbar Elementary
12 School and Philadelphia High School for Girls, where she
13 excelled academically; and

14 WHEREAS, After high school, Dr. Clayton earned a Bachelor of
15 Science degree and a Master of Education degree from Temple
16 University and her Doctor of Education degree in Educational
17 Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania, where she was a

1 Rockefeller Scholar; and

2 WHEREAS, In 1955, Dr. Clayton began her long service to the
3 School District of Philadelphia as a teacher at Harrison
4 Elementary School; and

5 WHEREAS, Dr. Clayton played an important role in the
6 development of academic curriculum for the school district,
7 becoming a collaborating teacher in the school district's Social
8 Studies Department in 1964 and project director of the school
9 district's African and Afro-American Studies Program in 1969;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, In 1971, Dr. Clayton left the school district to
12 serve as regional director of the United States Department of
13 Labor Women's Bureau, dealing with women's work-related issues
14 in the Mid-Atlantic region; and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. Clayton returned to the School District of
16 Philadelphia in 1972 as director and associate superintendent of
17 the district's Early Childhood Education Program; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1982, Dr. Clayton began her tenure as
19 superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia - the
20 first African American and the first woman superintendent of the
21 district; and

22 WHEREAS, As superintendent, Dr. Clayton faced a broad
23 spectrum of problems, including budget setbacks, low test
24 scores, declining enrollment and a high poverty concentration
25 throughout the district; and

26 WHEREAS, Under the leadership of Dr. Clayton, the School
27 District of Philadelphia put into place several successful
28 programs aimed at improving student achievement as well as
29 making the district financially solvent; and

30 WHEREAS, The programs put into place by Dr. Clayton reflected

1 her creativity and her awareness of the numerous social problems
2 affecting the school district at that time; and

3 WHEREAS, With the help of local businesses, programs such as
4 the Homeless Student Initiative and the Take Stock in Education
5 series flourished under Dr. Clayton's tenure; and

6 WHEREAS, Dr. Clayton was instrumental in advancing the
7 America 2000 program in city schools, an ambitious plan for
8 urban schools throughout the United States to implement radical
9 changes to help improve student achievement by the year 2000;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Dr. Clayton retired from her role as superintendent
12 in 1993, leaving a legacy of successful programs and fiscal
13 discipline in an era of seemingly unending problems; and

14 WHEREAS, The Constance E. Clayton Chair on Urban Education at
15 the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania,
16 was named in her honor, the first endowed professorship in the
17 United States named after an African-American woman; and

18 WHEREAS, Dr. Clayton has been the recipient of numerous
19 awards and honors, including several honorary doctorates, the
20 Gimbel Award, the Rev. Jesse F. Anderson Memorial Award from
21 Widener University, the Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania
22 Award and the Humanitarian Service Award presented by the
23 Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations; and

24 WHEREAS, Dr. Clayton's advocacy on behalf of education
25 continues to this day, as evidenced by her selection as the
26 recipient of the 2008 Star Community Commitment to Education
27 Award presented by the Philadelphia Education Fund; and

28 WHEREAS, It is fitting and proper that the House of
29 Representatives acknowledge individuals who devote their entire
30 lives to improving educational opportunities for children;

1 therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor the many
3 educational and professional achievements of Dr. Constance E.
4 Clayton, former superintendent of the School District of
5 Philadelphia.