

No. R-101. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Weston Playhouse Theater Company in celebration of its 75th (diamond) anniversary.

(H.C.R.74)

Offered by: Representative Olsen of Jamaica

Offered by: Senators Campbell, McCormack and Nitka

Whereas, the Weston Playhouse Theater Company (WPTC) has been a star on Vermont's and the nation's theatrical firmament for three-quarters of a century, and

Whereas, in 1935, Mrs. Herbert Otis Bailey provided generous funding for the construction of a new theater in the town of Weston which was located in a converted Congregational church that architect Raymond Austin beautifully redesigned with a Greek Revival façade, and

Whereas, in 1937, the Weston Theater Committee, under Raymond Austin's leadership, accepted a proposal from Boston Conservatory drama instructor Harlan Grant to establish a professional summer stock company, opening with Noel Coward's *Hay Fever*, starring a young Lloyd Bridges, and

Whereas, during the 1940s, the Weston Theater Club, the theater's then owner, acquired a neighboring building to house actors and host a post-show light entertainment known as the Cellar, and performances were offered in other Vermont communities, and

Whereas, this successful thespian enterprise suffered a severe setback on the early morning of July 17, 1962 when a fire severely damaged both buildings, but not the company, and that evening's scheduled performance of *Write Me A*

Murder occurred in a tent, and a rebuilt theater reopened a year later with *The Fantasticks*, and

Whereas, Walter Boughton, chair of the Amherst College drama department, became the theater company's second director in 1972, and despite floods in the 1970s which twice caused major damage, by the 1980s, the company was thriving, and

Whereas, in 1988, a new tri-directorship was initiated under the joint leadership of Malcolm Ewen, Tim Fort, and Steve Stettler, and they have led the WPTC in new directions, theatrically, with more Broadway and musical presentations, and organizationally, converting the playhouse into a nonprofit organization, establishing a \$2-million endowment, and implementing many capital improvements to the theater complex, and

Whereas, many outreach and education activities now occupy the WPTC's staff on a year-round basis, bringing great credit to this wonderful theater company, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the Weston Playhouse Theater company in celebration of its 75th (diamond) anniversary, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Weston Playhouse Theater Company.