

No. R-493. House concurrent resolution commemorating the centennial anniversary of Pierce Hall in Rochester

(H.C.R.414)

Offered by: Representative Haas of Rochester

Whereas, Julia and Ellen Pierce of Rochester commissioned the construction of Pierce Hall for the town as a community center and as a memorial to Chester Pierce Sr. and his son, Edward L. Pierce, and

Whereas, local architect Charles Kinsman designed Pierce Hall, with a large and fully equipped auditorium and meeting rooms, which opened in 1916, and over 600 persons attended the dedication, and

Whereas, in 1932, Mason Rural Lodge #29 F&AM became the building's owner, although it still hosted town meetings, theater events, movies, and roller skating, and

Whereas, in 1971, the Masons deeded the building to the Rochester school district, and it was used for kindergarten and shop classes, and

Whereas, the State Fire Marshall condemned the building in 1973, and, in 1974, the school district deeded Pierce Hall back to the Masons, who renovated it for their limited use, and

Whereas, in 2001, a group of local residents, including the late Charlie Biederman, Ken Landis, Dean Mendell, Ann Mills, Dick Robson, Nancy Sanz, Midge Scanlan, Kathryn Schenkman, and Bill Zucca created the nonprofit Pierce Hall Community Center organization (PHCC) to begin a discussion with the Masons about a comprehensive restoration of the structure, which is listed with the Vermont Division of Historic Sites, and

Whereas, during 2005, PHCC launched a fundraising campaign under the tireless leadership of Dr. Valerie Levitan and secured federal and private grants as well as individual donations, and, on November 1, 2005, the PHCC board of directors, in consultation with the Preservation Trust of Vermont, authorized architect Robson Bilgen to proceed with drawings for the restoration of the building, and

Whereas, beginning in 2006 and extending for a number of years, PHCC completed a five-stage project costing approximately \$1.35 million that restored all elements of the building, added an elevator tower to provide full public access, and opened a new and exciting era for the Pierce Hall, and

Whereas, 2016 marks Pierce Hall's centennial anniversary, and this especially joyous occasion will be celebrated on July 3rd and again November 25–26, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the centennial anniversary of Pierce Hall in Rochester, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Pierce Hall Community Center President Nancy Esteban Sanz.