

State of Vermont

House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Concurrent House Resolution

H.C.R. 335

House concurrent resolution honoring François Clemmons on his exemplary musical and theatrical career

Offered by: Representatives Scheu of Middlebury, Conlon of Cornwall, and Sheldon of Middlebury

Whereas, one of the most memorable characters on the long-running PBS children's television show *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood* was Officer Clemmons, an African American police officer, who, in one notable episode, shared a foot bath with Fred Rogers to convey support for racial integration, and

Whereas, in real life, Officer Clemmons is the talented and admired musician, actor, and playwright François Clemmons, who earned his bachelor's degree from Oberlin College and a master's degree from Carnegie Mellon University and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Arts from Middlebury College, and

Whereas, François Clemmons won the 1968 Metropolitan Opera Audition in Pittsburgh, and his singing career involved work with opera companies and orchestras, including his 1976 Grammy Award-winning performance in the Cleveland Orchestra and Chorus's recording of George Gershwin's opera, *Porgy and Bess*, and

Whereas, in the 1980s, François Clemmons established the Harlem Spiritual Ensemble to showcase the singing of African American spirituals, and

Whereas, from 1997 to 2013, François Clemmons served as the Alexander Twilight Artist in Residence at Middlebury College, performing numerous musical duties, including directing the Martin Luther King Spiritual Choir, and

Whereas, in 2019, the State of Vermont honored François Clemmons with the Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, and in 2020, his memoir, *Officer Clemmons*, is being published, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors François Clemmons for his exemplary musical and theatrical career, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to François Clemmons in Middlebury.