

House of Representatives



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

In the House, July 2, 2010

Whereas, A trio of 10th grade students, Laura Garcia, Catherine Breiner and Samuel Kopansky, of Philadelphia's J.R. Masterman High School, were inspired by the civil rights history and rare photographs presented in the virtual web museum, wdashistory.org; and

Whereas, This inspiration compelled them to write, produce and direct the exemplary history documentary, "WDAS: Broadcasting a Frequency of Change"; and

Whereas, This documentary portrays the research and writings of WDAS, civil rights historian and author, Wynne Alexander, who curates and writes for wdashistory.org; and

Whereas, Alexander helped the students' understanding of their intricate sociopolitical histories covered, the nuances and comparisons regarding radio and television's standards and practices over a 60-year period and WDAS Radio's crucial contributions to the United States Civil Rights Movement and integration of the entertainment industry; and

Whereas, These students then demonstrated an extraordinary grasp of this history and transformed their interest and knowledge into a compelling documentary; and

Whereas, Their teacher, Amy Cohen, instilled in them a great respect and appreciation of African-American history and was extremely helpful with her overall guidance, organizing the documentary and suggesting sources and interview subjects; and

Whereas, The students not only learned the historical information but also mastered the technical skills of film storytelling, film editing, direction, production and narration; and

Whereas, They did this working as a team, with all the poise and analytical skills of much older, seasoned professionals; and

Whereas, On March 4, 2010, their documentary went on to win first place in the citywide National History Day in Philadelphia, 2010 Contest for Best Group Documentary-Senior Division; and

Whereas, This victory is even more impressive given the other competitors were often older and more experienced student filmmakers; and

Whereas, With film in hand, on May 12, 2010, the trio then traveled to Lancaster County to compete and defend their work in the Statewide National History Day-Pennsylvania, 2010 Contest finals held at Millersville University; and

Whereas, They were victorious there too, winning the top prize, Statewide, for a "Group Documentary-Senior Division" on May 13, 2010; and

Whereas, Just like WDAS Radio itself, these first-time filmmakers overcame very difficult opposition from more established competitors and, undaunted, they rose to the top award-winning position both State and citywide; and

Whereas, Through their great work, Breiner, Garcia and Kopansky bring honor to the Philadelphia School System; and

Whereas, Through their film, more light is being cast on the groundbreaking history of WDAS Radio's pioneering founders Bob Klein and Max M. Leon; and

Whereas, Their revolutionary social and broadcasting innovations give the City of Philadelphia a leadership position in the cultural and civil rights history of our country; and

Whereas, This will now be seen at the national level as the film goes on to compete for the top prize in the entire United States, facing competition from across the country, United States' territories and parts of Europe and Asia; and

Whereas, The abilities of Breiner, Garcia and Kopansky to embrace this history and then share the profound impact this extraordinary radio station had on our society is a great gift to us all; and

Whereas, Just like WDAS itself, these students are a multicultural team promoting the enlightened stance that appreciates and embraces all cultures, and their documentary guides us to draw strength from this inspiring history so that we may better address and tackle the challenges of today; therefore be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives honor the achievement of Laura Garcia, Catherine Breiner and Samuel Kopansky and J.R. Masterman High School.

I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of House Resolution No. 858, introduced by Representatives Bishop, Readshaw, Kortz, Cohen, Donatucci, Hennessey, Millard, Beyer, Kotik, Godshall, Mahoney, K. Smith, Kula, Roebuck, Caltagirone, Goodman, Bradford, Daley, D. Costa, Grucela, Gingrich, Siptroth, Conklin, Youngblood, and adopted by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



Keith R. McCall
Keith R. McCall, Speaker