

SENATE RESOLUTION 7020

By Akbari

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate WDIA Radio of Memphis on the occasion of its seventy-fifth anniversary.

WHEREAS, legendary on the airwaves in Tennessee, WDIA is an AM radio station in Memphis that has a distinguished record of service to its community while also having a broader impact on the broadcasting industry as a whole as the first Black-formatted radio station in the nation; and

WHEREAS, AM 1070 WDIA first went on the air at its Union Avenue studios in 1947, playing country western and pop music; however, the station did not garner as much success as the owners had anticipated; and

WHEREAS, realizing there was an untapped market, WDIA became the first radio station in the country to cater to African Americans and soon after, became the second-ranked station in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, since its earliest days, WDIA has been an influential entity within the Memphis community and surrounding areas; its impact has been enormous not just in Memphis, but across the country, as numerous other stations have followed the WDIA model; and

WHEREAS, Memphis broadcasting legends such as Nat D. Williams, the first Black radio announcer on WDIA, Rufus Thomas, the Father of Memphis Soul, and Bev Johnson, the Queen of A.M. Radio, have graced the airwaves of WDIA; and

WHEREAS, now heard across the nation via iHeart Radio, WDIA credits itself as being a community focused entertainment outlet; those at the station consider part of their mission to bring goodwill to their audience and neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, notable entertainers such as B.B. King have recognized WDIA for being influential in their successful careers; the station also played a major role in the redevelopment and revitalization of Memphis landmarks Beale Street and Soulsville, USA; additionally, WDIA has been credited with having a hand in the development of the National Civil Rights Museum; and

WHEREAS, over the past seventy-five years, WDIA has provided countless hours of entertainment, news, and emergency broadcasting to thousands of listeners and has earned a hallowed place in the hearts of its fans; and

WHEREAS, we wish to seize this opportunity to specially honor all of the workers and the team behind WDIA Radio as they celebrate seventy-five years of broadcasting and service to their community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor and commend WDIA Radio in Memphis and join in the celebration of its seventh-fifth anniversary on October 27, 2023, marking the historic occasion when it came on the air as the first Black-programmed radio station in broadcasting history.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.