

House Concurrent Resolution No. 18

98TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE MCCANN BEATTY.

0402H.011

2 **WHEREAS**, the Lucile H. Bluford Branch of the Kansas City Public Library stands as
3 a tribute to one of the city's most accomplished and beloved individuals; and

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4 **WHEREAS**, from Bluford's early days as a student at Lincoln High School and the
5 University of Kansas to her long and distinguished career at *The Kansas City Call*, the black
6 newspaper founded in 1919, Bluford used her journalistic talents to champion civil rights and
7 strengthen the African-American community; and

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9 **WHEREAS**, in 1939, Bluford applied to the University of Missouri's graduate program
10 in journalism. Bluford had a successful career and didn't need further training, but she saw an
11 opportunity to challenge segregation in public universities; and

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13 **WHEREAS**, though the University of Missouri journalism program accepted Bluford
14 based on mailed transcripts, when she showed up to enroll officials saw she was black and
15 denied her entrance because state law restricted black students to Lincoln University in Jefferson
16 City, a historically black university; and

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18 **WHEREAS**, with the support of the NAACP, Bluford sued the University of Missouri.
19 In 1940 her case reached the Missouri Supreme Court, which ruled that the University had to
20 admit her because no equal program existed at Lincoln University; and

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22 **WHEREAS**, in response, the University of Missouri School of Journalism closed its
23 graduate program, claiming it could not operate properly because a majority of its professors and
24 students were serving in World War II; and

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26 **WHEREAS**, in 1984 Bluford received the University of Missouri esteemed Honor
27 Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism from the School of Journalism and in 1989 an
28 honorary doctorate in humanities; and

29 **WHEREAS**, after becoming editor in 1955 and later serving as part-owner and
30 publisher, Bluford made *The Kansas City Call* one of the largest and most important black
31 newspapers in the nation; and

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33 **WHEREAS**, Bluford took her role as a leader in the African-American community
34 seriously, even once scolding then-presidential candidate Jesse Jackson before a crowd of 7,000
35 people for visiting Kansas City without first notifying the black media; and

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37 **WHEREAS**, over the course of five decades, Bluford and the newspaper she led took
38 a decisive stand on hundreds of important issues. Bluford's editorials supported the boycott of
39 local department store lunchrooms that prohibited black patrons, mourned the assassination of
40 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the subsequent civil unrest, and supported the election of Kansas
41 City's first African-American congressman, Alan Wheat, and first African-American mayor,
42 Emanuel Cleaver II; and

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44 **WHEREAS**, through her bold stands, her determination to expose racism, and her clear
45 and forceful journalistic writing, Lucile Bluford helped change the way African-Americans are
46 treated, especially in the area of higher education:

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48 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the members of the House of
49 Representatives of the Ninety-eighth General Assembly, First Regular Session, the Senate
50 concurring therein, hereby recognize July 1, 2015, as "Lucile Bluford Day" in Missouri and
51 encourage the citizens of this state to observe the day with appropriate activities and events in
52 honor of a brave and persistent civil rights activist.

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