

A JOINT RESOLUTION designating a portion of Kentucky Route 324 in Mason County in honor and memory of Colonel Charles Young for his dedication to service to our country and distinction as the highest-ranking African American officer in the United States Armed Forces until his death.

WHEREAS, the late Colonel Charles Young was born to enslaved parents Gabriel and Arminta Young in Mays Lick, Kentucky, on March 12, 1864; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Charles Young was the third African American cadet to graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1889; and

WHEREAS, upon graduation, Colonel Charles Young served with the Ninth and Tenth Cavalries; he was appointed Major in the Ohio National Guard in 1898 and placed in command of its Ninth Infantry Battalion; and during that time he served as Professor of Military Science at Wilberforce University in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, as a Captain in 1901, Colonel Charles Young commanded a troop of the Ninth Cavalry in combat in the Philippine Islands during the Philippine Insurrection; and

WHEREAS, in 1903, Colonel Charles Young led a cavalry unit based out of the Presidio in San Francisco; and he became the first African American Superintendent of Sequoia National Park and oversaw the extension of roads into the park, making many parts accessible to visitors for the first time; and

WHEREAS, by 1904, Colonel Charles Young became the first African American officer appointed to duty as a military attaché, serving in Hispaniola (Haiti and Dominican Republic); and by 1912, Colonel Charles Young was military attaché to Liberia, where he was promoted to Major and developed the Liberian Frontier Forces and built roads; and in 1916, he was awarded the Spingarn Award from the NAACP for his exceptional work developing Liberia's infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Charles Young was reassigned to the Tenth United States Cavalry and served in the Punitive Expedition in Mexico with General Pershing from

1916-17, where he led a cavalry charge against Pancho Villa's troops and was wounded rescuing a large part of the Thirteenth Cavalry; and for his leadership, Colonel Charles Young was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of the First World War, Colonel Charles Young was the highest-ranking African American serving in the United States Army; and in June 1917, due to a diagnosis of hypertension, he was declared medically unfit for duty and was medically retired; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Charles Young challenged the decision and rode 500 miles on horseback from Wilberforce, Ohio, to Washington, D.C., to demonstrate his fitness for duty; and by June 1918, he was reinstated and assigned as military attaché to Liberia; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Charles Young was struck critically ill while on an intelligence mission, later died on January 8, 1922, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on June 1, 1923; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Charles Young's extraordinary military career spanned 33 years of segregated service at a time when our nation was plagued by the internal struggle of racism; and from 1894 until his death in 1922, Colonel Charles Young was the highest-ranking African American in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, due to the mores of the time, Colonel Charles Young was not granted the opportunity to receive a promotion through service during the First World War. Many opine that Charles Young would have been the first African American Brigadier General in the service of the United States Military; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly sees fit to honor the life and accomplishments of Colonel Charles Young by designation of a portion of this Commonwealth's roadways in his honor;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. The Transportation Cabinet shall designate Kentucky Route 324 in

Mason County, from its intersection with United States Highway 68 to its intersection with Kentucky Route 11, as the "Colonel Charles Young Memorial Highway," and shall, within 30 days of the effective date of this Resolution, erect the appropriate signage.