

By: Representatives Faulkner, Karriem,  
Kinkade

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 56

1 A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING MARCH 26, 2024, AS RUST COLLEGE DAY  
2 AT THE CAPITOL.

3 WHEREAS, established in 1866, by the Freedman's Aid Society  
4 of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Rust College was founded by  
5 missionaries from the North who opened a school in Asbury  
6 Methodist Episcopal Church, accepting adults of all ages, as well  
7 as children, for instruction in elementary subjects, and a year  
8 later, the first building on the present campus was erected; and

9 WHEREAS, in 1870, the school was chartered as Shaw  
10 University, honoring the Reverend S.O. Shaw, who made a gift of  
11 \$10,000 to the new institution, and in 1892, the name was changed  
12 to Rust University to avoid confusion with another Shaw  
13 University, with the new name being a tribute to Richard S. Rust  
14 of Cincinnati, Ohio, Secretary of the Freedman's Aid Society, and  
15 in 1915, the name was changed to Rust College; and

16 WHEREAS, as students progressed, high school and college  
17 courses were added to the curriculum, and in 1878, two students  
18 graduated from the college department, and as public schools for



19 African Americans became more widespread, the need for private  
20 schools decreased, and in 1930, the grade school was discontinued,  
21 but the high school continued to function until 1953; and

22 WHEREAS, a significant change in the administration of this  
23 distinguished institution took place in 1920, when Dr. M.S. Davage  
24 became the first African-American president, to hold that  
25 position, and Dr. L. M. McCoy (1924), his successor, was the first  
26 alumnus to serve his Alma Mater as president, and he was followed  
27 in 1957, by Dr. Earnest A. Smith, an alumnus, class of 1937, and  
28 in 1967, Dr. William A. McMillan, a non-alumnus assumed the  
29 presidency, and in 1993, Dr. David L. Beckley, an alumnus, class  
30 of 1967, became the 11th president of Rust College, in 2020, Dr.  
31 Ivy Taylor became the 12th, and first female president of Rust  
32 College, and in 2023, Dr. Robert M. Dixon was named interim  
33 president of Rust College; and

34 WHEREAS, among approximately 20,000 former students of Rust  
35 College, many completed only their elementary or secondary  
36 education; however, more than 5,500 have graduated from the  
37 college department, and among these alumni are bishops of the  
38 United Methodist Church and other church denominations, public  
39 school teachers and administrators, college presidents, lawyers,  
40 physicians, business and government leaders and ministers; and

41 WHEREAS, equipping and inspiring students for excellence and  
42 service in their communities and throughout the world, Rust  
43 College is a student-centered college where everyone is committed



44 to the success of all students, and it recognizes the threefold  
45 functions of education as teaching, learning, research, and  
46 community service, with its primary mission as teaching; and

47 WHEREAS, Rust College has dynamic and excellent associate and  
48 baccalaureate degree programs designed to support the cultural,  
49 moral, and spiritual development of its students, and is grounded  
50 in its legacy and commitment to social justice; and

51 WHEREAS, with a vision that reflects an institution of  
52 learning, inside and outside of the classroom, Rust College  
53 prepares its students for careers as they study in an environment  
54 that nurtures academic and personal development; and

55 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to  
56 commend extraordinary Mississippi academic institutions,  
57 especially those such as Rust College, whose dedication to  
58 academic excellence and commitment to its students brings honor to  
59 this illustrious college, and to the State of Mississippi:

60 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
61 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby  
62 designate March 26, 2024, as Rust College Day at the Capitol.

63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
64 furnished to Dr. Robert M. Dixon, President of Rust College, and  
65 to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

