

By: Representative Faulkner

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 80

1 A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING MARCH 26, 2025, AS RUST COLLEGE DAY
2 AT THE CAPITOL.

3 WHEREAS, Rust College, established in 1866 by the Freedman's
4 Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 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, the Holly Springs school was initially chartered in
10 1870 as Shaw University in honor of generous donor the Reverend
11 S.O. Shaw before first being renamed Rust University in 1892 to
12 avoid confusion with another Shaw University, with the new name
13 being a tribute to Richard S. Rust of Cincinnati, Ohio, Secretary
14 of the Freedman's Aid Society, and ultimately, Rust College in
15 1915; and

16 WHEREAS, as the school's first students progressed, high
17 school and college courses were added to the curriculum, and in
18 1878, two students graduated from the college department; however,



19 as public schools for African Americans became more widespread,
20 the need for private schools decreased which, in time, resulted in
21 the grade school's discontinuance in 1930 and the high school's in
22 1953; and

23 WHEREAS, a significant change in the administration of Rust
24 College took place in 1920 when Dr. M.S. Davage became the first
25 African American to hold the position of president, and over the
26 last 100 years, the office has been held by a long line of
27 distinguished leaders, including: in 1924, Dr. L.M. McCoy, the
28 first alumnus to serve his alma mater as president; in 1957, Dr.
29 Earnest A. Smith, an alumnus, Class of 1937; in 1967, Dr. William
30 A. McMillan; in 1993, Dr. David L. Beckley, an alumnus, Class of
31 1967; in 2020, Dr. Ivy Taylor, the first female president; and in
32 2023, Dr. Robert M. Dixon, interim president, who in July 2024,
33 became the 13th 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, but more than 5,500 have graduated from the college
37 department to later become bishops of the United Methodist Church
38 and other denominations, public school teachers and
39 administrators, college presidents, lawyers, physicians, business
40 and government leaders and ministers; and

41 WHEREAS, true to its mission to equip and inspire students
42 for excellence and service in their communities and throughout the
43 world, Rust College, a student-centered college where everyone is



committed to the success of all students, recognizes the importance of a multifaceted education valuing teaching, learning, research and community service; and

WHEREAS, with its primary mission being teaching, Rust College is grounded in its legacy and commitment to social justice and offers outstanding associate and baccalaureate degree programs designed to support the cultural, moral and spiritual development of its students while preparing them for impactful careers; and

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

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to commend extraordinary Mississippi academic institutions, especially those such as Rust College, whose 159 years dedication to academic excellence has produced outstanding graduates who have used their intellect and talent to enhance the quality of life throughout Mississippi, thereby bringing honor to this illustrious college and to the State of Mississippi:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby designate March 26, 2025, as Rust College Day at the Capitol.

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

