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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 13

Offered January 19, 2026

Commending the Academy of Music Theatre.

Patron—Walker

WHEREAS, the Academy of Music Theatre, a historic theater and arts institution in Lynchburg that has played a prominent role in shaping the history and culture of the city, celebrated its 120th anniversary in 2025; and

9 WHEREAS, with support from Richard D. Apperson, owner of the Lynchburg Traction and Light
10 Company, the Academy of Music Theatre opened in 1905 and quickly became one of Central Virginia's
11 leading venues, hosting a variety of performances, including live theatre and musicals, concerts, and silent
12 films; and

13 WHEREAS, after suffering a devastating fire in 1911, the Academy of Music Theatre was rebuilt in a
14 more ornate style by local business leader Charles Guggenheimer and his group of investors and reopened a
15 year later; and

16 WHEREAS, from 1905 through the 1920s, the Academy of Music Theatre featured several nationally and
17 internationally renowned performers of the day, including John Philip Sousa, Will Rogers, and the Ziegfeld
18 Follies, burnishing Lynchburg's reputation as a regional destination for the performing arts; and

19 WHEREAS, the Academy of Music Theatre experienced a period of decline in the mid-20th century as
20 entertainment interests shifted from theater to film and permanently closed in 1958; and

WHEREAS, although the Academy of Music Theatre sat empty for 60 years, several historical preservation groups recognized its significance to Lynchburg's historical and cultural landscape and fought to save it from destruction over the decades; and

24 WHEREAS, in 1969, the Academy of Music Theatre was listed on the National Register of Historic
25 Places; nearly a half-century later, a grassroots campaign spearheaded by the Academy of Fine Arts led to the
26 theater's three-year, \$30 million restoration and its official re-opening on December 6, 2018; and

27 WHEREAS, today, as part of the Academy Center of the Arts, the Academy of Music Theatre serves as a
28 vibrant hub for performances, arts education, and community engagement, fostering access to the arts for
29 residents of all ages and backgrounds; and

30 WHEREAS, the Academy of Music Theatre stands as a testament to the Lynchburg community's
31 commitment to the arts and promises to make a profound and lasting impact on the city into the 21st century
32 and beyond; now, therefore, be it

33 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Academy of Music Theatre hereby be commended on
34 the occasion of its 120th anniversary; and, be it

35 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for
36 presentation to the Academy of Music Theatre as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for its
37 history and its contributions to Lynchburg and the Commonwealth.