ENGROSSED RESOLUTION

Relating to: commending the life and public service of Ezekiel Gillespie.

Whereas, Ezekiel Gillespie was born about May 31, 1818, in Greene County, Tennessee; and

Whereas, he sustained himself during his youth by selling small, self–made goods that he peddled from town to town; and

Whereas, in 1852, he moved to Milwaukee, earning a living by selling groceries, vegetables, poultry, and game; and

Whereas, he eventually went to work for Alexander Mitchell, working as a porter for the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company; and

Whereas, despite his limited financial means, he selflessly boarded migrant families from the south; and

Whereas, in 1865, he helped to petition the legislature for a referendum on African–American suffrage; and

Whereas, later that year, while attempting to vote in that referendum, he was denied suffrage by the Milwaukee Board of Election Commissioners; and

Whereas, he successfully brought suit against the board, prompting the Wisconsin Supreme Court to decide unanimously in favor of African American suffrage; and

Whereas, thanks to his efforts, African Americans for the first time voted freely in elections during the elections of 1866; and

Whereas, in 1869, he helped found the first African Methodist Episcopal church in Wisconsin; and

Whereas, he spent much of his late life raising funds for, and speaking on behalf of, the church; and

Whereas, Gillespie died in 1892; and

Whereas, the adoption of this senate resolution is supported not only by the senate, but also by members of the assembly, including specifically Representatives Sheridan, Schneider, Young, Grigsby, Sinicki, Mason, Fields, Benedict, Turner, and Hintz; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, That the members of the Wisconsin senate do hereby commemorate the life and achievements of Ezekiel Gillespie.

State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin

_____
Senator Fred A. Risser
President of the Senate

_____
Date

_____
Robert J. Marchant
Senate Chief Clerk