

RESOLUTION No. 22-12-018

Sponsored by Commissioners Tom Stinnett, Staci Crisp-Lawhorn and Mike Akard

RESOLUTION TO URGE THE TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO DESIGNATE THE CITY OF FRIENDSVILLE THE PINK MARBLE CAPITAL OF TENNESSEE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of Blount County, Tennessee, in session assembled this 15th day of December 2022:

WHEREAS, Friendsville, Tennessee was settled in the 1790s by the Religious Society of Friends, better known as the Quakers, who opposed war and slavery. The town became a crucial player in the Underground Railroad, which aided runaway slaves and others who wished to escape to the North. William Hackney was a Friendsville Quaker who helped more than 2,000 people leave the South using Cudjo's Cave in Friendsville. It is even the subject of a book written by John Trowbridge in 1863, called "Cudjo's Cave." The cave is now closed to the public, but Friendsville remains on the Civil War Trail; and

WHEREAS, Friendsville was chartered by the State of Tennessee in 1953 and an important part of Blount County's history and of the State of Tennessee, including the production of marble utilized around the world;

WHEREAS, as far back as 1838 the first marble in Tennessee was quarried and used for tombstones and early local homes and buildings. Its notoriety came in 1869 with the use of Tennessee marble at our nation's capital, and official recognition by the Tennessee State Geologist. The East Tennessee region became known for its pink marble, from the reaches of Luttrell to Knoxville and on to Friendsville, TN, and the soft and rich colored hues of pink marble blocks have been quarried by hundreds of laborers and cut and fabricated for some few thousand buildings throughout the entire United States; and

WHEREAS, an early pioneer in the industry was John J Craig who founded most of the industry here in Friendsville in 1878. The second prominent Blount County operation was created by Leonard Endsley in 1949, also in Friendsville; and

WHEREAS, today, under the control of Tennessee Marble Company and the leadership of President Monica Gawet, this legacy continues with its plant and quarry in Friendsville, as the sole quarrier and supplier of Tennessee pink marble for dimensional stone purposes. Since opening its doors in 1993, 30 years ago, over 1.5 million working labor hours have been spent quarrying, cutting, and finishing marble from its plant location in Friendsville, TN. During that time, over 1 million square feet of stone products made from marble quarried in Friendsville has been supplied to over 2,000 buildings across the USA; and

WHEREAS, some of the more notable of these projects that have utilized marble from Friendsville for either exterior or interior architectural products or monuments are: US Capitol Visitor's Center – DC, Barnes Foundation Museum Building – Philadelphia, PA, Center for Strategic International Studies – DC, National Constitution Center – Philadelphia, PA, National Gallery of Art – DC, First Presbyterian Church - Charlotte, NC, East Wing, National Gallery of Art – DC, Ritz Carlton Hotel - Charlotte, NC, Natural Museum of American History – DC, Griffith Observatory - Los Angeles, CA, National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden – DC, Kansas State Capitol - Topeka, KS, Popay' sculpture at the Capitol Building – DC, Federal Courthouse - Davenport, IA, Pembroke Office Building – DC, Minnesota State Capitol - St. Paul, MN, 555 Pennsylvania Ave – DC, James Blackstone Library - Branford, CT, Grand Central Terminal – NYC, Rhode Island State House, Met Life Building – NYC, Art Institute of Chicago, Cathedral of Immaculate Conception - Albany, NY, Maryville Municipal Building, Wyoming Supreme Court Building - Cheyenne, WY, Sam Houston Monument Base – Maryville, TN, St. Paul Public Library, Blount County Court House, John Sevier Building - Nashville, TN, Louisville Town Hall Knoxville Museum of Art, Maryville Municipal Building, Knoxville Convention Center, Sam Houston Monument Base – Maryville, TN, Vietnam Veterans Memorial – World's Fair Park, University of Tennessee Letterman's Wall – UTK, Louisville Town Hall; and

WHEREAS, working marble into architectural features and monuments is a tradition dating back to the earliest civilizations but especially notable during the Greek and Roman Empires with skills

and virtues handed down through the generations from the greatest artisans to their predecessors. Tennessee Marble Company is recognized for its quality work, using modern fabrication technology, including CNC cutting, as well as hand-carving and finishing techniques, promoting and carrying on these great traditions in Friendsville; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee Marble Company has received several notable awards given by our industry trade group and peers recognizing them for outstanding quality, commercial fabrication, including these:

2005 – Marble Institute of America – Pinnacle Award of Excellence – Alabama Department of Archives and History Building, West Wing Addition

2012 – Marble Institute of America – Pinnacle Award of Excellence – Harris County Courthouse

2016 – Natural Stone Institute – Grande Pinnacle Award of Excellence – Minnesota State Capitol

2019 – Natural Stone Institute – Women In Stone – Pioneer Award – Monica Gawet, President and Owner

2019 – Natural Stone Institute – Pinnacle Award of Excellence – Church Street United Methodist Church, Knoxville

2020 – Natural Stone Institute – Pinnacle Award of Excellence – Dallas Municipal Building

2022 – Natural Stone Institute – Pinnacle Award of Excellence – Moynihan Train Hall, Pennsylvania Station, NYC; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee marble is a lasting building material and Friendsville’s distinctive pink marble is known and appreciated for its unique beauty throughout the country. This recognition honors the past and the present people who worked these quarries and created all the beauty this stone gives in our architectural world.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE BLOUNT COUNTY LEGISLATIVE BODY MEETING IN REGULAR SESSION AT MARYVILLE, TENNESSEE, on this 15th day of December, 2022, that:

1. As Tennessee Marble Company is the sole quarrier and supplier of Tennessee pink marble for dimensional stone purposes, the City of Friendsville should be recognized for its unique marble utilized across the country, including our State Capital and our Nation’s Capital.
2. The Blount County Board of Commissioners respectfully request the assistance of the Tennessee General Assembly to take appropriate actions to declare the City of Friendsville be designed the Pink Marble Capital of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT the County Clerk mail certified copies of this Resolution to the Blount County Legislative Delegation to the Tennessee General Assembly in Nashville, Tennessee, to show support for this request.

ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF DECEMBER 2022.

CERTIFICATION OF ACTION ATTEST

Commission Chairman

County Clerk

Approved: _____

Vetoed: _____

County Mayor

Date