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Recognizing and honoring the Alumnae Association of the Philadelphia High School for Girls on its 125th Anniversary.

WHEREAS, The Alumnae Association of the Philadelphia High School for Girls was founded in 1889, a time when most professions and workplaces were restricted to the male gender. Most institutions of higher learning gave only limited access to women, or in many cases, none at all; and

WHEREAS, From its very beginning, Philadelphia High School for Girls played a leading role in the dramatic changes in women's lifestyles that began in this country in 1848, the year in which the school opened and the same year of the first Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York. The school proved to be a beacon of light in the bleak picture of women's lives at that time. Originally founded to train women teachers, the school program was soon expanded to provide full academic training; and

WHEREAS, Girls' High has never ceased to provide the best education possible for all of the young women who filled its classrooms and who earned their right to teach and to aim for higher education. From the earliest days in its unique history, the school has been the launching pad for great women achievers who influenced and enhanced the history and culture of these United States. In addition, from the school's inception, the ideals and spirit of the school have fostered lifelong sisterhood and friendship among its graduates; and

WHEREAS, On January 19, 1889, twenty-five loyal graduates joined their hands and hearts on to place their signatures on the Charter that launched the Alumnae Association of the Girls' High and Normal School of Philadelphia, the name of the school at that time. A framed copy of this Charter, with its beautiful calligraphy and handwritten signatures, adorns the wall of the Alumnae Room of the school at Broad and Olney. In the Charter, the founders stated their objectives: "The purpose for which the Association is formed is the cultivation of social relations among the graduates of the Girls' High and Normal School of Philadelphia and the promotion of the best interests of the said school and the furthering of all efforts for the enlargement of opportunities for women"; and

WHEREAS, In 1894, the Alumnae Association scored a triumph when it petitioned the University of Pennsylvania, until that time a solid fortress of masculinity, to accept women applicants to the Scientific Department and also asked that graduates of the Girls' High and Normal School be accepted without taking examinations; and

WHEREAS, Throughout its existence, the Alumnae Association has focused heavily on philanthropy, including the establishment of a fund to provide aid to teachers in need who were graduates of the school, the donation of famous sculptures from the classical works of ancient Greece and Rome to the school, a copy of the famous bronze standing statue of Abraham Lincoln by Auguste St. Gaudens, financial support for scholarships and the school library and the advanced placement program, and the creation of the Court of Honor of Distinguished Daughters-the school's hall of fame-among many other contributions; and

WHEREAS, The Alumnae Association and the Philadelphia High School for Girls have been working as

partners for 125 years to maintain their traditions of excellence and to prepare for the future; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize and honor the Alumnae Association of the Philadelphia High School for Girls on its 125th Anniversary.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Alumnae Association of the Philadelphia High School for Girls as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.