

RESOLUTION FOR HENRY L. STEVENS, JR.

WHEREAS, Henry L. Stevens, Jr. was born, reared and lived in Warsaw in Duplin County, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Henry L. Stevens, Jr. organized the Charles R. Gavin American Legion Post 127 in 1921, served as its Commander and founded the Warsaw Armistice Day (currently known as the Warsaw Veterans Day) Celebration, which is the longest continuous Veterans Day celebration in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 1925, he was elected the youngest State Commander of the American Legion in the country. Under his administration the North Carolina organization led the South in industrial, economic and social programs, and as Commander he was responsible for "the vision of faith" that extended all legion programs to North Carolina's Negro Veterans; and

WHEREAS, Henry L. Stevens, Jr. was elected the 14th and youngest National Commander of the American Legion. As such, he became the first Southerner and the only North Carolinian to be so honored. Following the disastrous "Bonus March" on Washington, D.C. by World War I veterans in 1932, he set in motion the Legion's format for employment, which ultimately provided over one million jobs for deserving veterans; and

WHEREAS, in his role as National Commander in 1931-1932, Henry L. Stevens, Jr., advised President Herbert Hoover and Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur on military and veterans affairs and had significant input in reversing a reluctant Congress to allocate funds to maintain a military presence; and

WHEREAS, in Paris he was installed in the French Legion of Honor with the rank of Commander, and in 1932 joined General John J. "Blackjack" Pershing, the Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I, as the only other American at this time to hold a superior Legion of Honor rank; and

WHEREAS, through the American Legion, Henry L. Stevens, Jr. was the effective force influencing legislation that provided medical treatment, care, and hospitalization for sick and destitute American Veterans, leading to the establishment of the Veterans Administration; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Town Board of Commissioners of Warsaw, the Warsaw Chamber of Commerce and the Duplin County Board of Commissioners requested the North Carolina Board of Transportation honor Henry L. Stevens, Jr.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the North Carolina Board of Transportation names Interstate 40 west of Warsaw in Duplin County from 6.95 miles north of N.C. 24 to 6.95 miles south of N.C. 24 in honor of Henry L. Stevens, Jr. for his outstanding dedication and service to his community, his state, his nation and to all of America's veterans.

That appropriate signs be erected at a suitable time.

Adopted, this the second day of June 2000, by the North Carolina Board of Transportation.


Secretary of Transportation