

**STATE OF MAINE**

---

**IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD**

**TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-TWO**

---

**JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS  
AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF ASHLEY BRYAN**

**WHEREAS**, Ashley Frederick Bryan, born in Harlem in New York City in 1923, the 2nd oldest of 6 children of immigrant parents from Antigua, a renowned author and illustrator and a resident of the State of Maine for over 60 years, died on February 4, 2022 at 98 years of age; and

**WHEREAS**, while a student at Cooper Union in New York City in 1942, Mr. Bryan was drafted to serve in a segregated battalion of the United States Army, with which he participated in the D-Day invasion, landing at Omaha Beach, and documented his experiences through writing and art; he told this important and inspiring story in 2019 in his celebrated memoir "Infinite Hope: A Black Artist's Journey from World War II to Peace"; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Bryan later studied art around the world and went on to a long teaching career at Queens College, Philadelphia College of Art, Lafayette College and Dartmouth College, but in the summer of 1946, he visited Maine for the first time as a student and, upon viewing the mountains of Mount Desert Island and the Cranberry Isles, decided this was where he wanted to live; and

**WHEREAS**, after coming to live on Little Cranberry Island, Mr. Bryan enriched the lives of island residents, visitors and schoolchildren in Maine and around the world with over 50 books, including "Beautiful Blackbird" and "Freedom Over Me," which were a force for bringing people of color and issues of racial diversity into children's literature and for introducing children of all backgrounds to African American poetry and folktales; and

**WHEREAS**, a child of the Great Depression who let nothing go to waste, Mr. Bryan used debris washed up on the shores of the Cranberry Isles to create puppets and stained-glass windows that have been displayed in museums around the country and are now on permanent display in the Ashley Bryan Storyteller Pavilion in Islesford on Little Cranberry Island; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Bryan illuminated the African American experience and cultural heritage through his art, for which he has been recognized by universities and institutions internationally and which paved the way for African American writers and illustrators, creating opportunities for greater diversity in the world of children's literature; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Bryan received the Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award, the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, several Coretta Scott King Awards and a Newbery Honor, as well as many other recognitions, including the renaming of the Islesford school as the Ashley Bryan School in celebration of his love of children and commitment to education, and in September 2021, the Farnsworth Art Museum announced Mr. Bryan as the recipient of the 2022 Maine in America Award, which recognized outstanding contributions to Maine's role in American art and is the museum's highest honor; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirtieth Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, take this occasion to recognize the achievements and contributions of Ashley Bryan and to offer his family and friends our condolences upon his passing.