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## Supps Approve Light Wording

Words For The Light  
PE Supervisors Approve Wording For Plaque  
For The Light Of Reconciliation Memorial

### **By KEN WOODLEY**

FARMVILLE—The Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors formally approved wording Tuesday night for The Light Of Reconciliation. The words, voted for by all Supervisors present, will be engraved on a plaque mounted on a monument/marker on the courthouse lawn as part of The Light Of Reconciliation, which will be first illuminated in the courthouse bell tower on the evening of July 21.

The Virginia Civil Rights Memorial will be unveiled that morning on Capitol Square in Richmond.

The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved of The Light Of Reconciliation during its regular May meeting last week and appointed a committee to work out the details. That committee, chaired by Supervisor Mattie P. Wiley, met Tuesday afternoon and agreed on The Light Of Reconciliation plaque wording to submit for formal and final approval by the Board of Supervisors:

*“Illuminated in the courthouse bell tower on July 21, 2008 by the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County in honor of Barbara Johns and the students of Robert Russa Moton High School and all the children of our county for their historic role in ending public school segregation in the United States and with sorrow for closing schools. When we raise our eyes to see this light, may we also incline our hearts and minds to shine our own light of reconciliation toward all people.”*

The motion for adoption of the wording during Tuesday night’s reconvened Board meeting was made by Supervisor James Moore, following the presentation by Ms. Wiley, who said the committee had done “a good job of coming to conclusions and one of them (is the wording),” which she asked to be approved as presented.

“I think it’s wonderful,” Supervisor Sally Gilfillan said of the wording prior to its adoption.

The wording honors the nation-shaping changes which came through the efforts of Prince Edward County residents to end public school segregation—which is the focus of the Virginia Civil Rights Memorial.

And five words—“with sorrow for closing schools”—express in clear, direct and unmistakable language the feelings contained in part of a resolution that the Board of Supervisors adopted on May 17, 2004 which stated, among other things, that the Board members “hereby regret that decisions of the past have adversely shaped the lives of many citizens of our County.” That 2004 resolution had noted Virginia’s strategy of Massive Resistance and Prince Edward County’s zero dollar appropriation for public schools, closing them, in 1959, rather than integrate.

Those five words—“with sorrow for closing schools”—act as a bridge that crosses into the embrace of reconciliation and in a way that is intended to encourage everyone who sees The Light Of Reconciliation to look into themselves, and to the future, and discover the ways that they, themselves, can be a vehicle of continuing reconciliation in their own lives and community, moving forward together.