

Rep. Camilleri offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 264.

A resolution to honor the memory of Elizabeth Denison Forth.

Whereas, Elizabeth Denison Forth was the first African American female landowner in the state of Michigan and generously endowed St. James Episcopal Church in Grosse Ile Township; and

Whereas, Elizabeth (Lisette) Denison was born a slave in 1786 on the estate of William Tucker in Macomb County, the second of six children to Peter and Hannah Denison; and

Whereas, Lisette Denison and her brother escaped to Canada shortly after 1807 and both returned to Detroit around 1815 as free people. Denison then worked for Solomon Sibley as a domestic servant, investing her pay in land, specifically four lots in Pontiac totaling 48.5 acres. This made her the first African American female landowner in Michigan. The property is currently part of Oak Hill Cemetery, and a State of Michigan historical marker commemorates her ownership; and

Whereas, Lisette married Scipio Forth in 1827 and in 1831 gained employment with Major John Biddle. Throughout this time Mrs. Denison Forth continued to invest, including buying stock in a steamboat, bank, and a lot in Detroit in 1837. By 1854, she had purchased her own home, located at what is currently 328 Macomb Street and is a Michigan Historic Site; and

Whereas, When Mrs. Denison Forth died on August 7, 1866, she had willed a portion of her estate to be used for the construction of a church. Her contribution provided the bulk of the funds for St. James Episcopal Church on Grosse Ile, with architect Gordon W. Lloyd hired to design the structure. Construction began in 1867 and was completed the following year. The church's red doors are dedicated to Mrs. Lisette Forth's memory and a State of Michigan historical marker commemorates both the church and herself; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body honor the memory of Elizabeth Denison Forth; and be it further

Resolved, That Elizabeth Denison Forth's legacy inspire others and remind us of the important achievements she contributed to Michigan and to the African American community.