A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF EDMUND HARDING AND COMMEMORATING THE TERCENTENARY OF THE FOUNDING OF BATH, FIRST TOWN IN THE COLONY OF NORTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, Native Americans resided in the vicinity of today's Town of Bath for more than a century before Europeans arrived; and

Whereas, by the 1690s, European settlers began moving into northeastern Carolina, in large part from the colony of Virginia; and

Whereas, the Lords Proprietors of Carolina authorized Governor John Archdale to dispose of land to settlers and investors at reasonable prices but not less than one-half cent per acre; and

Whereas, in 1696, Governor Archdale, acting for the Lords Proprietors, proclaimed and established the entire region from the Albemarle to the Cape Fear as Bath County, in honor of the Proprietor John Granville, Earl of Bath; and

Whereas, in 1701, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts sent a library from Britain to St. Thomas Parish in Bath County, and that library became the first public library in the colony of North Carolina; and

Whereas, about 1704, John Lawson, who would become surveyor-general of the colony and author of the first book outlining the area's history, laid out on a small bluff overlooking the north shore of the Pamlico River a town site with lots for sale; and

Whereas, on March 8, 1705, the Colonial Assembly incorporated that site as the Town of Bath, the first town in northern Carolina; and

Whereas, in 1715, the Colonial Assembly established Port Bath as the first official port of entry in the province to include the town as well as the Pamlico Sound and the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers running into it; and

Whereas, in 1718, the Town of Bath played a significant role in the golden age of piracy in North Carolina, whereby Governor Charles Eden pardoned pirates Edward Teach (Blackbeard) and Stede Bonnet; and
Whereas, by the 1730s, the Town of Bath was on the main post road of the British colonies, which ran from Maine to Georgia; and
Whereas, in 1734, construction began on St. Thomas Church, which today is the oldest existing church in North Carolina and which was pastored for many years by Alexander Stewart, who also served as church superintendent of schools for African-Americans and Native Americans; and
Whereas, in 1743, 1744, and 1752, the Colonial Assembly of North Carolina met in the Town of Bath; and
Whereas, in 1746, the Town of Bath might have become the permanent capital of the colony but for a single vote by the Upper House of the Colonial Assembly; and
Whereas, early residents of the Town of Bath included at various times four governors of Carolina and the first chief justice of the colony; and
Whereas, Edmund Harding, the Reverend A.C.D. Noe, and others in the mid-twentieth century gave generously of their time, imagination, and resources to ensure the preservation and restoration of Bath; and
Whereas, Edmund Harding in particular traveled throughout the country and abroad to promote the history of North Carolina and its first town, earning him the title "North Carolina's Ambassador of Goodwill"; Now, therefore,
Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

SECTION 1. The General Assembly honors the memory of Edmund Harding in preserving and restoring the Town of Bath and recognizes the tercentenary of the Town of Bath, the first of numerous towns incorporated in North Carolina. The General Assembly calls upon all North Carolinians to observe, celebrate, and participate in events and programs commemorating the tercentenary of the Town of Bath and its importance in the history of the State.

SECTION 2. The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Mayor of the Town of Bath.

SECTION 3. This resolution is effective upon ratification.