

Congresswoman Johnson Humbled and Grateful for Elementary School Named in her Honor

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Press Release

DALLAS, TX – Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson released the following statement on the Dallas Independent School District Board of Trustees’ decision to name a new school in her honor - the Eddie Bernice Johnson Elementary School.

“My focus is always on serving the constituents of District 30 without expecting any recognition. I am grateful to all of you for considering me worthy of this honor.

“Whoever thought in my lifetime I would have a school of this magnitude bearing my name – I thank you for that black girl from Waco, Texas whose goal in life was to relieve pain and promote health for all.

“Throughout my career serving as a representative for this region both in Austin, and in Washington, I have kept my eyes on public education and our schools. Let me take a moment to reflect on such progress that has been made since my day. Growing up during segregation, I didn’t have the same opportunities as the students who will, one day, attend this school. The big thing was trying to get a book with all its pages because in my school all the African American kids got books that white kids discarded.

“When I finished high school and desired to be a professional nurse, there was not a college in Texas I could attend with a nationally accredited nursing program, so I attended St. Mary’s College Holy Cross School of Nursing in South Bend, IN at Notre Dame University. I only say this to say to young people who will attend the magnificent school - you have a better opportunity, please make the best of it.

“When you get discouraged remember what an opportunity you have and yes you can rise - be focused and determined. It is my hope that the students

attending this school get all the opportunities they deserve, so that we can mold and grow the next generation of scientists, physicians, dentists, and community leaders. It's no coincidence that governments who invest in their young people and their education have better outcomes and develop at a much faster pace than those who refuse to invest in their future.

"The teachers and faculty in public schools across the country are responsible for inspiring and lifting millions of young people out of poverty and into the middle class. I am sure many teachers and faculty are facing difficult choices as we continue to deal with the coronavirus pandemic. Balancing their desire to help young people succeed in the future while calculating the risks going into the classroom may have on their health is no easy task. The least we can do is to stand with them and respect whatever decision is made.

"I shall leave you with a quote from my father that I used in my honors speech when I graduated from high school – I do not know where he got it, but it has stayed with me. "Once a task has begun, never leave it till it's done – be the labor great or small – do it well or not at all."