

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2007**

**SESSION LAW 2007-68  
SENATE BILL 872**

AN ACT TO ADOPT THE THALIAN ASSOCIATION AT WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA, AS THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY THEATER OF NORTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, the Thalian Association was organized in 1788 in Wilmington, North Carolina; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association is the oldest community theater in the State of North Carolina; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association was organized for the purpose of providing a foundation for the artistic, cultural, and social development of the Wilmington community; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association participated in the endowment of the Innes Academy, the first public school in Wilmington, and supported that endowment by organizing a community theater company, the proceeds from which supported the public school and the poor of Wilmington; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association was first chartered by the State of North Carolina in 1814 to provide "learning and the promotion of literature" to the people of Wilmington; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association community theater became an enduring tradition in the Wilmington community that has lasted from 1788 to the present day and from its beginning has attracted the support and participation of the most public-spirited of Wilmington citizens; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association contributed in 1851 to the building of the Washington Monument, and its public-spirited generosity is displayed to this day in a memorial stone on Landing 23 that reads "Wilmington, North Carolina, Thalian Association"; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association, championing the need for a large and beautiful public theater, conceived the original idea of a civic union of culture and government and formed a partnership in 1854 with the City of Wilmington to build a combination theater and City Hall; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association in 1854 sent its president, Robert H. Cowen, to New York City to commission America's premier theater designer, John M. Trimble, to design a theater and City Hall building; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association in 1857 to 1858 supervised the construction of the theater and City Hall building, named Thalian Hall; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association in 1860 gave its ownership interest in Thalian Hall to the City of Wilmington; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association in the Civil War years of 1861 to 1865 committed itself to fund-raising performances in Thalian Hall to help alleviate sufferings from yellow fever and smallpox epidemics; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association in the Reconstruction years of 1865 to 1871 struggled against political partisanship and provided a bridge over the chasm of bitterness; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association in the post-Civil War era supported popular education in a nonpartisan manner despite opposition, continued the tradition of theater

despite economic decline and poverty, opened Thalian Association membership, and allowed onstage participation in the theater for the first time to females; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association maintained through the years of poverty the spirit of culture and provided a focal point for the revival of the performing arts in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association rescued Thalian Hall from neglect and possible destruction and restored it to its original beauty; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association inaugurated children's theater in Wilmington; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association is fully committed in the present and in the future to the historic and cultural preservation of Wilmington and Southeastern North Carolina in the face of rapid development and irreversible change; and

Whereas, the Thalian Association stages each year five productions of drama and musical theater in the Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts, six productions of children's theater in the Hannah Block Historic USO and Community Arts Center, a street fair showcasing locally produced visual art, and a bluegrass musical festival; and

Whereas, for no monetary consideration, the Thalian Association promises to further assist the State of North Carolina in its work of advertising and promoting the educational, cultural, and economic interests of the State, and in attracting and encouraging people from other states and countries to visit the State where so many shrines and historical sites are located; and

Whereas, the General Assembly wishes to recognize the Thalian Association for its contributions to the cultural life of this State over the last 218 years by recognizing it as the official community theater of North Carolina; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Chapter 145 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 145-28. State community theater.**

**The Thalian Association in Wilmington, North Carolina, is adopted as the official community theater of North Carolina."**

**SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 29<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2007.

s/ Marc Basnight  
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

s/ Joe Hackney  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley  
Governor

Approved 2:48 p.m. this 7<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2007