

2003 SESSION

ENGROSSED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 713

Offered January 13, 2003

Celebrating the life of Dr. John L. Howlette, Sr.

Patron—Hall

WHEREAS, Dr. John L. Howlette, Sr., a pioneering Richmond optometrist and exceptionally dedicated and effective civic leader, died on October 9, 2002; and

WHEREAS, a native of Richmond, John Howlette graduated from Armstrong High School, Virginia Union University, Howard University in Washington, D.C., and the Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, a major force in the effort to break down segregation in the City of Richmond, Dr. Howlette, the first African-American optometrist in Richmond and the second in Virginia, opened his practice in the City's Jackson Ward neighborhood in 1952; and

WHEREAS, a caring and professional optometrist, Dr. Howlette quickly became popular and successful, and he used his success to encourage other African Americans to enter the profession; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Howlette's efforts to secure better eye care for African-American patients expanded beyond Richmond when he became one of the organizers of the National Optometric Association, a group that now has more than 500 members; and

WHEREAS, assuming leadership roles in traditional professional organizations, Dr. Howlette served as president of the Richmond Optometric Society and the Virginia Optometric Association, which honored him as Optometrist of the Year in 1974; and

WHEREAS, in 2001 Dr. Howlette became the first Virginia optometrist to be inducted into the National Optometric Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, for 50 years a leader in the Jackson Ward community, Dr. Howlette founded the Jackson Ward Business Association, lobbied City Hall for development funding and better police protection for the neighborhood, and was instrumental in the building of the Jackson Center office building; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Howlette also served on the Richmond School Board from 1980 to 1986, was appointed to the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and served on the boards of Richmond Renaissance, the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia, and the Virginia State College Foundation; and

WHEREAS, throughout a long and distinguished career, Dr. Howlette served the residents of Jackson Ward and the City of Richmond as a healer, mentor, role model, and community leader; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly note with great sadness the passing of an outstanding citizen of the Commonwealth, Dr. John L. Howlette, Sr.; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Dr. John L. Howlette, Sr., as an expression of the high regard in which his memory is held by the members of the General Assembly.

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