

2004 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 422

Offered February 25, 2004

On the death of James L. Williams.

Patrons—Ward, BaCote, Alexander, Barlow, Bland, Councill, Eisenberg, Hall, Howell, A.T., Joannou, Johnson, Keister, Lewis, Melvin, Miles, Moran, Oder, Phillips, Pollard, Scott, J.M., Shannon, Sickles, Spruill, Stump, Van Landingham, Van Yahres, Ware, O. and Watts

WHEREAS, James L. "Jim" Williams of Hampton, one of the last surviving Tuskegee Airmen and a longtime NASA Langley engineer, died on January 20, 2004; and

WHEREAS, a native of Philadelphia, Jim Williams enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps in 1944 when he was only 17, and soon volunteered to become part of the famed Tuskegee Airmen; and

WHEREAS, in 1945 Jim Williams graduated as a flight officer in Class 45F at the Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama, thus joining an elite group of 996 pilots who formed the Tuskegee Airmen, nearly half of whom saw combat during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Jim Williams earned his engineering degree from the University of Michigan in 1951 and immediately began working with the National Advisory Group for Aeronautics at Langley, the precursor to NASA; and

WHEREAS, Jim Williams battled successfully to earn acceptance into a work group, but during his early years at NASA was refused admission to Langley's rest rooms and cafeteria because of his race; and

WHEREAS, Jim Williams persevered, earned a master's degree in mathematics in 1970 from The College of William and Mary, and worked in the analysis of aircraft stability and control; and

WHEREAS, Jim Williams completed his career at NASA working as part of a team looking for ways to minimize the size and vibration of large space structures, such as telescopes, antennas, and space stations; and

WHEREAS, following his retirement in 1990, Jim Williams was an instructor in the School of Engineering at Hampton University and a member of the Hampton School Board; and

WHEREAS, throughout a life of pioneering achievements and significant accomplishments, Jim Williams served the Commonwealth and the nation with great diligence, courage, and steadfastness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of an exceptional Virginian, James L. Williams; 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 James L. Williams as an expression of the esteem in which his memory is held by the members of the General Assembly.

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