

2006 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 396

Offered February 27, 2006

Commemorating the lifetime achievements of Prince Hall.

Patrons—Jones, D.C., Alexander, BaCote, Dance, Hall, McClellan, McEachin, Spruill, Tyler and Ward

WHEREAS, Prince Hall, who died in 1807, was the most famous black man in the Boston area during the American Revolution and was the founder and master of the world's first black Masonic Lodge, African Lodge No. 459; and

WHEREAS, born about 1735, Prince Hall was the slave of a Boston leather dresser named William Hall, who granted Prince Hall his freedom in 1770 as a reward for 21 years of steadfast service; and

WHEREAS, in 1775 Prince Hall petitioned to become a member of Boston's St. John's Lodge of Freemasons, but was turned down, presumably because of his race; and

WHEREAS, shortly thereafter, Prince Hall and 14 other free black men approached the British Army Lodge of Freemasons stationed near Boston and were initiated into the lodge on March 6, 1775, becoming the first blacks to be initiated into the Masonic Order in America; and

WHEREAS, Prince Hall was the founder of Freemasonry among blacks in this country, and today the nation's largest black fraternal order is the Prince Hall Masons; and

WHEREAS, in 2005 the Hobson Lodge No. 23, Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Virginia, petitioned the City of Richmond to change the name of the street on which the lodge is located from Robinview Drive to Prince Hall Drive; and

WHEREAS, the request was granted, and on February 11, 2006, a celebration of the street renaming was held at Hobson Lodge No. 23, which is now located on Prince Hall Drive in the City of Richmond; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby celebrate and commemorate the lifetime achievements of Prince Hall and commend Hobson Lodge No. 23 for its successful effort to honor the memory of Prince Hall; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Anthony L. Brown, Worshipful Master of Hobson Lodge No. 23, as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations and best wishes.

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