

2006 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 167

Celebrating the life of the Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 2, 2006
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 10, 2006

WHEREAS, Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough, a native of Richmond, and an alumnus of Longwood University and one of its most beloved employees, was called to his eternal home on April 14, 2005; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough graduated from Armstrong High School in Richmond and started his college career at Virginia Union University; and

WHEREAS, in the middle of his sophomore year, Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough transferred from Virginia Union University, where he was a science major on an academic scholarship, to Longwood University in the spring of 1977 to play basketball, where he was one of only two African-American males on campus; and

WHEREAS, as a guard on the Longwood basketball team for two years, he averaged 22.2 points per game in the 1976-1977 season, the first season for men's basketball, and 16.9 points per game the next year, and scored 46 points against Bluefield College in the final game of the 1977-1978 season, setting a school record that remains unbroken; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough graduated from Longwood University in 1982 with a bachelor's degree in therapeutic recreation, worked at Southside Virginia Community College as a student services assistant and activities coordinator from 1981 to 1988, and directed the Charlotte County Office on Youth for one year before returning to his alma mater as director of the precollege admissions program, where he spent many hours encouraging children from low-income families to attend college; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, he earned a master's degree in community and college counseling from Longwood University and was employed as senior associate director of admissions at the university; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough, Longwood University's "shining star," is remembered by the Longwood community as an outstanding student and athlete, a much admired colleague, and an effective and popular admissions recruiter who was instrumental in the university's strong admissions growth over the years; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough was called to the gospel ministry and licensed to preach in 1986, and at one time pastored two churches, Yielding Zion Baptist Church in Burkeville and St. Matthew's Baptist Church in Kenbridge; and

WHEREAS, affectionately called "Pastor Jimmy," Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough was the pastor of St. Luke's Baptist Church in Brookneal, and as a gifted and eloquent speaker, he was known for his impassioned and sometimes humorous oratory, abiding faith, and ability to relate to young people, delivering countless invocations at campus events; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough loved people, particularly young people, devoting considerable time to and demonstrating a genuine interest in their welfare, and because he was dedicated to teaching as part of his ministry, his gifted oratorical ability enabled him to exegete the Bible so plainly that even the youngest member of the congregation could understand it; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough lived courageously, dedicated his life to fulfilling its divine purpose, faced death confidently and without fear, and believed and lived by the scriptural principles he taught his congregation, "to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, and that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord"; and

WHEREAS, his spirit of giving and generosity was demonstrated through his dedicated service as a member of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Scholarship Awards Committee, established by the General Assembly, to assist certain persons in obtaining an education, as a part of Virginia's two-year-long commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the 1954 landmark United States Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which declared segregated public schools unconstitutional; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough has been memorialized by Longwood University through two scholarships: the renaming of the Admissions Incentive Scholarship, which he administered, as the Jimmy Yarbrough Admissions Opportunity Scholarship Fund, an award established primarily for first-generation college students; and the Jimmy Yarbrough Citizen Leader Award, to recognize a student athlete who exhibits exemplary performance academically, in intercollegiate competition, and community service; and

WHEREAS, among his passions in life were God, family, church family, friends, young people, the less fortunate, basketball, cooking, and distinctive suits and colorful ties, and friends recall his fondness

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for saying that he would have scored more points during his Longwood basketball career if the three-point rule had been in effect; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough is fondly remembered as a man of substance, character, and a model of perpetual optimism and commitment to improving the lives of others, and for his beautiful, ever-present smile and upbeat personality, even in the face of a life-threatening illness, and his infectious exuberance, unmatched humor, and unparalleled conscientiousness; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough, "Pastor Jimmy," was a servant of God, undershepherd, father, husband, admissions recruiter and counselor, and a rare and valuable member of the community, and he will be missed by everyone who loved and knew him; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Reverend James McNeal Yarbrough, native son, as an expression of the respect and honor in which his memory is held by the members of the General Assembly.