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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 312

Offered January 10, 2007

Prefiled November 6, 2006

*Celebrating the life of Leonia Jackson Russell.*

Patron—Miller

WHEREAS, Leonia Jackson Russell of Portsmouth, a respected citizen and admired spiritual leader in the community, died on July 18, 2006; and

WHEREAS, Leonia Jackson was the daughter of the late Annie and Mark Jackson and the youngest of five siblings; she grew up in the Virginia Beach community, attended public schools, and graduated from Princess Anne County Training School (later named Union Kempsville High School); and

WHEREAS, in 1953, Leonia Jackson met and fell in love with Clarence Vernie Russell, Sr., and the couple had five wonderful children; and

WHEREAS, a talented woman who passionately cared about the welfare of young people, Leonia Jackson Russell owned and operated a daycare center for children in Portsmouth for four years and furthered her education to serve as a paraprofessional staff member at J.J. Smallwood Elementary School for three years; and

WHEREAS, over the years, Leonia Jackson Russell was the admired first lady of New Light Baptist Church in Virginia Beach and then Union Baptist Church in Suffolk, where she diligently worked to improve the quality of life for members of her beloved congregations and to help families in need living in nearby communities; and

WHEREAS, Leonia Jackson Russell, serving the church in countless teaching and leadership positions, was invaluable in the development and implementation of church programs, such as the Food Bank, the Hour of JOY, and the Golden Age Banquet, which honored the contributions of seniors aged 70 and older; and

WHEREAS, always eager to help her fellow residents, Leonia Jackson Russell actively participated in the Parent Teacher Associations in the Virginia Beach and Chesapeake public schools, served as a chairperson in the NAACP membership drive, and became a member of the Democratic Committee for Progress; and

WHEREAS, for 53 years, Leonia Jackson Russell was the devoted wife and spiritual partner of Bishop Clarence Russell, and the couple lived a life of service to the church and its many missions in the community; and

WHEREAS, Leonia Jackson Russell will be fondly remembered for her kind and generous nature and greatly missed by her devoted husband, adoring children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and other family members, as well as her numerous friends and admirers in the church and in the Hampton Roads community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly mourn the passing of a fine Virginian, Leonia Jackson Russell; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Leonia Jackson Russell as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

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