

2008 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 342

Commending the Norfolk Botanical Garden on the occasion of its 70th anniversary.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 8, 2008

Agreed to by the Senate, February 14, 2008

WHEREAS, the Norfolk Botanical Garden, a nationally recognized garden that attracts visitors from around the world, will celebrate its glorious 70th anniversary in 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Norfolk Botanical Garden graces 155 acres, with over 30 themed gardens that can be viewed by tram, boat, and by foot, and its dedicated volunteers provide more than 20,000 hours each year working in all aspects of the garden's operation to make it spectacular for all to enjoy; and

WHEREAS, the inspiration for the Norfolk Botanical Garden came from cofounders Frederic Heutte, a young horticulturalist, and Thomas P. Thompson, Norfolk's city manager from 1935 to 1938; they believed the city could support beautiful azalea gardens that would rival those of Charleston, which drew thousands of tourists annually even during the Depression; and

WHEREAS, the City of Norfolk provided the two founders with 75 acres of high, wooded city ground and another 75 acres of Little Creek Reservoir to establish a city garden, and a Works Progress Administration (WPA) grant was secured to pay for an azalea garden project; and

WHEREAS, since most of the male labor force was at work on other WPA projects, a group of more than 200 African-American women and 20 men were assigned to work on the garden; ground was broken on September 15, 1938, and the site was readied for 4,000 azaleas, 2,000 rhododendrons, several thousand shrubs and trees, and one hundred bushels of daffodils; and

WHEREAS, the garden soon became a popular attraction for citizens and visitors, and in 1955 the city named the garden the Norfolk Municipal Gardens; when the Old Dominion Horticultural Society took over maintenance of the city garden on February 18, 1958, the name was changed to the current Norfolk Botanical Garden; and

WHEREAS, over the years, many changes and additions have been made throughout the Norfolk Botanical Garden, including improvements for an Azalea Festival and construction of waterways for boat rides throughout the site; improvements during the 1960s focused on increasing the variety of collections and plant material and the Japanese Garden, Desert Plants Garden, Colonial Garden, and Rose Garden, which features All-American Rose Selection winners, were among the new gardens added; and

WHEREAS, by the 1960s, the Norfolk Botanical Garden included 1,120 trees, 9,649 shrubs, 10,377 perennials, 8,698 ground covers, 23,830 bulbs, and 17,900 annuals; the NATO Bridge, Water Cascade, NATO Tower, Renaissance Court, Treasure Island, and Statuary Vista, which includes statues from around the world, were added to the diverse attractions; and

WHEREAS, the Norfolk Botanical Garden continues to garner increased attendance and public support and has added many new gardens, including a Camellia Garden, Holly Garden, Sunken Garden, Botanical Garden, Butterfly Garden, Hydrangea Garden, Sculpture Garden, Sensory Garden, Perennial Garden, Virginia Native Plant Garden, Terrace Garden, Four Seasons Garden, Children's Adventure Garden, and WPA Memorial Garden; a visitor hall, reflecting pool, and greenhouse are exciting additions; and

WHEREAS, the Norfolk Botanical Garden was designated a state botanical garden in 1995, recognized as a Virginia Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005, and is accredited by the American Association of Museums Commission; and

WHEREAS, a shining star among the City of Norfolk's numerous attractions, the Norfolk Botanical Garden reaches more than 20,000 children and adults every year through its many outstanding programs, classes, lectures, and events; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend and congratulate the Norfolk Botanical Garden and its exemplary volunteers on the occasion of the garden's 70th anniversary in 2008; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Norfolk Botanical Garden as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration of its glorious achievements and gratitude for its continuing commitment to the citizens of the City of Norfolk and the Commonwealth.

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