

2008 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 433

Commending Eugenia West Ferrell.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 22, 2008
Agreed to by the Senate, February 28, 2008

WHEREAS, Eugenia West Ferrell of Virginia Beach, formerly of Richmond, was honored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Virginia with the Joshua S. Collins Award of Excellence in 2007; and

WHEREAS, the distinguished Joshua S. Collins Award of Excellence is awarded to an individual or organization that has made a significant contribution to help people with brain disorders; and

WHEREAS, a former teacher and stay-at-home mother, Eugenia "Gene" Ferrell began her mission to raise awareness of mental illness issues when her two brothers, Sterling and Beverley West, were diagnosed with schizophrenia, a brain disorder that affects about one percent of American adults; and

WHEREAS, in 1968, when even speaking about mental illness was thought to be taboo, Eugenia Ferrell, a resident of Richmond at the time, contacted the American Schizophrenia Foundation to obtain a list of local members, so that she could establish an affiliate organization in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Eugenia Ferrell moved to Virginia Beach the same year she became the first president of the Schizophrenia Foundation of Virginia, and she obtained office space and established headquarters for the state nonprofit in the Pembroke One Building on Independence Avenue; and

WHEREAS, a tireless supporter for Virginians with mental illness and their families, Eugenia Ferrell published a newsletter, formed support groups, and started committees to handle legislative and public education issues; and

WHEREAS, in 1984 the Schizophrenia Foundation of Virginia joined forces with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to form NAMI Virginia, which was based in Richmond; and

WHEREAS, Eugenia Ferrell became vice president and chair of NAMI Virginia's Legislative Activities Committee and in later years served as president of the state board; and

WHEREAS, a hardworking advocate and articulate spokesperson, Eugenia Ferrell traveled to Richmond for the Coalition for Mentally Disabled Citizens of Virginia's annual rallies in January and would talk with state legislators about the many needs of persons with brain disorders; and

WHEREAS, now in her 80s, Eugenia Ferrell remains involved taking calls for three hours every Tuesday for the NAMI Virginia Beach chapter, located in the same office she established many years ago, and she is a longtime supporter of the Walk for Hope, a Virginia Beach fundraiser in its 18th year that raises awareness and educates citizens about mental illness; and

WHEREAS, Eugenia Ferrell believes passionately that people with mental illness should be encouraged to live up to their potential, and she has worked diligently throughout her life of public service to ensure that citizens with brain disorders have every opportunity to enjoy a full and happy life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend and congratulate Eugenia West Ferrell as a recipient of the Joshua S. Collins Award of Excellence by the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Eugenia West Ferrell as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude for her commitment to the mental health and well-being of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

ENROLLED

HJ433ER