

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 55

*Commending Dr. Marcella F. Fierro.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 11, 2008  
 Agreed to by the Senate, January 17, 2008

WHEREAS, Marcella F. Fierro, M.D., a revered and beloved physician and dedicated public servant, will retire in 2008 after a long and distinguished career as the chief medical examiner for the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Marcella Fierro was born and grew up in Buffalo, New York, attended high school at Holy Angels Academy, and earned a bachelor's degree in biology *cum laude* and received the St. Catherine Medal for Student Achievement from D'Youville College in Buffalo; and

WHEREAS, Marcella Fierro achieved her dream of becoming a doctor by receiving her medical degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo, School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences in 1966; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Fierro completed an internship and residency at Ottawa Civic Hospital in Ontario, Canada, and specialized in a pathology residency at the Cleveland Clinic Educational Foundation and at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU); and

WHEREAS, destined to become a knowledgeable and skilled practitioner, Dr. Fierro served as chief resident in pathology at VCU and completed a fellowship in forensic pathology in 1974 at the Medical College of Virginia, now VCU School of Medicine; and

WHEREAS, an inspirational teacher and excellent physician, Dr. Fierro has served on the faculty of the Department of Legal Medicine and Pathology at VCU School of Medicine since 1973, as clinical professor of pathology at the University of Virginia from 1983 to 1992 and again from 1999 to 2002, and as staff pathologist at Medical College of Virginia Hospitals from 1975 to 1992; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Fierro has served the Commonwealth and its medical community with great skill and commitment, first as deputy chief medical examiner for Central Virginia for 17 years, and after teaching at East Carolina University School of Medicine, she then returned to her adopted home of Virginia in 1994 to become the Commonwealth's chief medical examiner, supervising over 230 dedicated medical examiners and professionals across the state; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Fierro has given her time and immense talents to numerous professional and civic organizations, including as a member of the Italian American Cultural Association, American Medical Association, and International Association for Identification; as a fellow of the College of American Pathologists, American Academy of Forensic Sciences, and American Society of Clinical Pathologists; as president of the National Association of Medical Examiners; and as consultant to the Federal Bureau of Investigation Task Force's National Crime Information Center (NCIC); and

WHEREAS, Dr. Fierro has received numerous accolades and awards for her many accomplishments and contributions to her profession, including the National Association of Medical Examiners' Service Award, election to the prestigious national Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, and the University at Buffalo School of Medicine Alumni Association's Lifetime Achievement Award; and

WHEREAS, Marcella Fierro's medical expertise and sincere dedication served as a perfect model for Patricia Cornwell's popular literary medical examiner and heroine, Kay Scarpetta, a character that inspired a trend of crime fiction in books and on television that delves into Dr. Fierro's serious and intriguing world of forensic pathology and criminal justice; and

WHEREAS, during her long tenure as an exemplary public servant and head of the Office of Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Fierro has built a secure and lasting legacy as an outstanding administrator and visionary leader; a friend and valuable mentor to her medical students and her many colleagues across Virginia and the nation; and as a respected educator, selflessly sharing her vast knowledge and wealth of experience with her peers and the Commonwealth's bright and talented future generation of doctors and scientists; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Fierro has served the Commonwealth and its citizens through her high standards of medical practice, professional integrity, and scientific inquiry, and she will retire from her position as chief medical examiner for the Commonwealth to apply her keen intellect and many talents in new and exciting endeavors, as well as enjoy more quality time with her devoted husband of 41 years, Dr. Robert J. Fierro, her two wonderful children, her grandson, and many other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend Dr. Marcella F. Fierro on her many years of outstanding service to the citizens of the Commonwealth; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Dr. Marcella F. Fierro and her family as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude for her superb achievements and best wishes for a happy and rewarding retirement.