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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 601

Offered March 3, 2008

Celebrating the life of the Reverend Dr. Darrel Rollins.

Patron—Jones, D.C.

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Darrel Rollins of Richmond, a community supporter, a staunch defender of the poor and oppressed, and a beloved pastor, died on June 5, 2007; and

WHEREAS, born in New Jersey, Darrel Rollins was raised Seventh-day Adventist and graduated from the church's Atlantic Union College with aspirations of becoming a minister; and

WHEREAS, later in life, Darrel Rollins became a Baptist and with his conversion went on to earn a master of divinity degree from New York Theological Seminary and a doctorate of ministry degree from Howard University School of Divinity; and

WHEREAS, before coming to Richmond, Dr. Rollins was pastor of St. James Baptist Church in Goochland County; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Rollins was called to be pastor of 31st Street Baptist Church in Richmond in 1982, and under his devoted and skilled leadership, the church grew from 150 to 1,600 members; and

WHEREAS, an inspiration to all who knew him well, Dr. Rollins admired and was inspired by the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King and was well-known among his colleagues and congregation for his longtime commitment to the liberation of people of African descent, social justice for all people of the world, and the plight of the oppressed; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Rollins worked very hard to build a bright future for his 31st Street Church that would serve its congregation and the community for years to come, and under his guidance, more than 50 new ministries were added at the church, including a partnership with sister churches, the Center Advancing Self Help; and

WHEREAS, always ready to help the less fortunate, Dr. Rollins was instrumental in the survival of the old East End soup kitchen located at the 31st Street Church in 1990 that fed approximately 50 people per day, and now the meals program is feeding 100 to 200 hungry, homeless citizens in the community every day; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Rollins served as the director of urban studies, worked in many administrative roles at the theological school, and taught as an assistant professor for Virginia Union University and was also an adjunct professor for Virginia Commonwealth University, where he served on the board of the VCU Foundation; he was the former dean of the Shaw University Divinity School and chair of the board of trustees at Virginia University at Lynchburg; and

WHEREAS, during the 1970s, Dr. Rollins lectured on black studies across America and was the author and host of the radio show, "The Black Perspective," which aired on WRVA; and

WHEREAS, over the years, Dr. Rollins gave his time and expertise to numerous civic and professional organizations, including as vice chair of Richmond Renaissance; as president of the Urban League of Greater Richmond, the Baptist Ministers' Conference of Richmond and Vicinity, and the Richmond Committee of Black Clergy; and as a board member of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Rollins will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his devoted wife, Sandra E. Chandler Rollins; his son Douglass Rollins; his beloved granddaughter Holly; his many relatives, friends, and colleagues; and the members of 31st Street Baptist Church; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly mourn the passing of a fine community leader and pastor and outstanding Virginian, the Reverend Dr. Darrel Rollins; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of the Reverend Dr. Darrel Rollins as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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