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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 43

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 7, 2008

Celebrating the life of Yolanda Denise King.

Patron—Marsh

WHEREAS, Yolanda Denise King, eldest child of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Coretta Scott King, who was born on November 17, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, just two weeks before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery city bus, entered into eternal rest on May 15, 2007; and

WHEREAS, Yolanda Denise King was only 10 weeks old when her parents' home was bombed and seven years old when her father poured out his heart's yearnings for his "four little children" on the steps of the Lincoln Monument in the now-famous "I Have a Dream" speech; and

WHEREAS, as a young girl, she witnessed the turbulence of the Civil Rights era, experienced rabid racial animus and mortal threats upon her family, and suffered the murder of her father when she was 12 years old; and

WHEREAS, Yolanda Denise King graduated with honors from Smith College and earned a master's degree in theater from New York University; and

WHEREAS, an accomplished businesswoman, she founded her own production company, Higher Ground Productions, and as a gifted actress, she earned the respect of her peers by learning her craft, and used drama and motivational and inspirational speaking to keep her father's message of love and nonviolence alive; and

WHEREAS, Yolanda Denise King was also an author, producer, advocate for peace and nonviolence, and appeared in numerous films, including portraying Rosa Parks in the 1978 television miniseries, "King," and Reena, the daughter of slain NAACP Field Secretary Medgar Evers, in the motion picture, "Ghosts of Mississippi"; and

WHEREAS, Yolanda Denise King was known for her smile, humility, beautiful spirit, and humanity, and for a keen ability to focus on her priorities apart from the legacy of her parents; and

WHEREAS, although she followed her parent's path of social justice, Yolanda Denise King was a civil rights leader and community activist in her own right, inspiring others "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God"; and

WHEREAS, Yolanda Denise King devoted her time and gifts to advance many noteworthy causes, serving as a member of the Board of Directors of the King Center, working with the American Heart Association to raise awareness, especially among African Americans, of the dangers of stroke; and

WHEREAS, armed with courage, faith, love, warmth, gentleness, and a dignified charm, Yolanda Denise King, like her father and mother, never wavered from her call and purpose in life to fight for peace, equality, and justice; and

WHEREAS, the memory of Yolanda Denise King, "torch bearer of the dream," will be forever cherished by her brothers and sister, many loving relatives and friends, and by each person whose life she touched; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Yolanda Denise King, eldest daughter of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Coretta Scott King, and "torch bearer of the dream"; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Yolanda Denise King as an expression of the General Assembly's esteem for her memory and deep and abiding respect for her lifelong service to her community and the nation.

INTRODUCED

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