ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 716

Commending the Reverend Dr. Curtis W. Harris.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 20, 2011
Agreed to by the Senate, January 21, 2011

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Curtis W. Harris, the first African-American mayor of the City of Hopewell and revered civil rights icon, will be honored by residents across the Commonwealth with a Unity Ride and Rally on January 22, 2011, and a musical tribute during the Andrew Shannon Gospel Music Celebration on Saturday, January 29, 2011; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Harris began his legendary fight for civil rights as a young man during the 1950s and 1960s when he was employed as a janitor at a local company; and

WHEREAS, as union shop steward, Dr. Harris saw that African Americans were only hired for custodial positions; he pushed for the company to hire African Americans for other positions as well; and

WHEREAS, in 1960 Dr. Harris participated in a protest sit-in at a segregated drugstore in Hopewell, one of the many sit-ins and protests he attended during those turbulent years despite personal costs and hardships; and

WHEREAS, a key figure in the national struggle for civil rights, Dr. Harris proudly marched alongside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on his historic Selma to Montgomery civil rights march that eventually led to the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Harris has played a pivotal role with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference throughout the years, serving as the national vice president in 2005; and

WHEREAS, closer to home, Dr. Harris has continued to break barriers, eventually rising to become Hopewell's first African-American mayor; he fulfilled the duties of the office with great distinction, working diligently to ensure efficient and effective local government for all residents; and

WHEREAS, as the pastor of Union Baptist Church in Hopewell, Dr. Harris has encouraged and taught his congregation as its members live out their faith through worship and service to the larger community; and

WHEREAS, today, Dr. Harris is heralded as one of the Commonwealth's most celebrated religious, social, civic, and political leaders for his unselfish and unrelenting efforts over the years to pursue and defend the rights of others; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend the Reverend Dr. Curtis W. Harris for his inspiring leadership and selfless service; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Reverend Dr. Curtis W. Harris as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation and admiration for his lifetime of service to others.

ENROLLED