

2011 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 855

Commending Katherine Johnson.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 18, 2011
Agreed to by the Senate, February 24, 2011

WHEREAS, Katherine Johnson, a pioneer in the American space movement, was recognized for her accomplishments and contributions with an honorary doctorate of science from Old Dominion University in December 2010; and

WHEREAS, a native of West Virginia, Katherine Johnson received her early schooling in White Sulphur Springs; her parents decided that their children would have access to a high school education despite the fact that there were no high schools for African Americans in the area; and

WHEREAS, while her father remained in White Sulphur Springs to work, Katherine Johnson and her siblings and mother lived from September to June in another city where a high school was located; and

WHEREAS, a brilliant student who showed a natural affinity for numbers, Katherine Johnson completed high school at the age of 14 and graduated from West Virginia State College at the age of 18 with a degree in mathematics and French; she later took graduate courses in mathematics until family responsibilities intervened; and

WHEREAS, Katherine Johnson taught for several years before taking a position with the Langley Research Center, part of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, which later became the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and

WHEREAS, as a pool mathematician, Katherine Johnson worked in the early space program, helping calculate trajectories for different missions, including the route of Apollo 11, the first manned mission to the moon, and the 1961 Mercury mission, the first manned mission into space; and

WHEREAS, while at NASA, Katherine Johnson helped author the first textbook on space and before retiring in 1986, worked on the space shuttle program, the Earth Resources Satellite, and on plans for a mission to Mars; and

WHEREAS, over the course of her long and illustrious career, Katherine Johnson received numerous accolades and honors, including designation by the National Technical Association as the 1997 Mathematician of the Year, and induction into the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Katherine Johnson was recognized as one of 24 Black Inventors and Scientists at the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum in Philadelphia, featured in a United States Office of Education documentary, and included in the United States Department of Energy's "Black Contributors to Science and Energy Technology"; and

WHEREAS, a remarkable woman who played a vital role in this nation's early space program, Katherine Johnson blazed a trail for women and African Americans while helping the United States make history; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend Katherine Johnson on her achievements and contributions to the American space movement; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Katherine Johnson as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration and respect for her many accomplishments.

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