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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 902

Offered February 16, 2011

Commending the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral on the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

Patrons—Joannou and Loupassi

WHEREAS, in 2011 the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral celebrates 100 years of sharing its rich faith and heritage with the Hampton Roads area; and

WHEREAS, the Hampton Roads Greek community traces its roots to 1898, when John Gretes, the first known Greek immigrant to Hampton Roads, arrived; he was followed shortly thereafter by George Christopoulos and his wife, Paraskevi; and

WHEREAS, for the next decade, the Greek population grew slowly and maintained its spiritual roots and traditions in the Greek Orthodox faith, with the Reverend Father Constantine Doropoulos from Baltimore periodically visiting to serve the Liturgy at St. Paul's Church on St. Paul's Boulevard and City Hall Avenue; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1900s, community members banded together to form a Greek school for their children while also raising money to appoint a priest and start a building fund for a church in Norfolk; and

WHEREAS, the Greek community was elated when the Reverend Protopresbyter George Smyrnakis became the area's first permanent Greek Orthodox priest; on March 3, 1911, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated with 25 members; and

WHEREAS, the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral continued to grow over the years, buying the church at Freemason and Cumberland Streets, establishing a choir that would eventually become nationally renowned and a Sunday school, and appointing a board of trustees; and

WHEREAS, in 1940 the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral came under the canonical ecclesiastical authority of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America; and

WHEREAS, as the congregation grew, the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral expanded again, purchasing land in 1947 to build a new sanctuary, where worship services were first held in 1955; a few years later a Hellenic Center and parish home were added to the grounds; and

WHEREAS, in 1955 the first Hellenic Women's Club Bazaar was held; this event would grow and expand over the years, becoming the Greek Festival in 1986, the Tidewater area's oldest and largest ethnic festival, which features Greek cuisine, dancing, and shopping for arts and crafts; and

WHEREAS, the burgeoning population of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral necessitated another major expansion in 1995, which added a bookstore, St. Theodore's Chapel, meeting rooms, an expanded kitchen, a remodeled Hellenic Center, and classrooms so that the spiritual development of the faithful could continue; and

WHEREAS, throughout its century of existence, the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral has given immeasurable service to the local community through its many missions and the abundant generosity of its members; and

WHEREAS, today, the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral serves as the spiritual center for almost 700 families while spiritually and culturally influencing the Tidewater region; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral on the occasion of its 100th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations on its centennial anniversary and best wishes for continued success in its missions.

INTRODUCED

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