

12103244D

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 98

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 10, 2012

Designating October 15, in 2012 and in each succeeding year, as First Lady Edith Bolling Wilson Day in Virginia.

Patrons—Crockett-Stark and Rush

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, October 15, 2012, marks the 140th anniversary of the birth of Edith Bolling, the 35th First Lady of the United States and wife of President Woodrow Wilson; and

WHEREAS, born in Wytheville, Virginia, on October 15, 1872, Edith Bolling was a ninth-generation descendant of Pocahontas; and

WHEREAS, the modest second-floor residence, located above street-level storefronts at 145 East Main Street, Wytheville, Virginia, was the birthplace of Edith Bolling and home to her family, including 10 siblings, grandparents, extended family, and 26 canaries; and

WHEREAS, Edith Bolling received her primary education from parents and grandparents at their home; she left Wytheville at age 15 to study in Abingdon, Virginia, and later in Richmond, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 1896, Edith Bolling married Norman Galt of Washington, D.C., at St. John's Episcopal Church, the Bolling family church, located one block from the Bolling Home, where she returned to dedicate stained glass windows in her family's memory in 1960; and

WHEREAS, Norman Galt was the owner of Galt Jewelers and Silversmiths and, following his death in 1908, Edith Bolling Galt operated Galt Jewelers for several years, an extraordinary feat for a woman at that period in time; and

WHEREAS, several years later as a widow, Edith Bolling Galt met President Woodrow Wilson, following his first wife's death, and a storybook courtship began, which resulted in their marriage on December 18, 1915, at her home in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, being First Lady during World War I, Mrs. Wilson abandoned most social aspects of the White House and instead observed Gas-less Sundays, Meat-less Mondays, and Wheat-less Wednesdays to set an example for the federal rationing effort; and

WHEREAS, similarly, Mrs. Wilson set sheep to graze on the White House lawn rather than wasting manpower mowing it and auctioned the wool for the benefit of the American Red Cross; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Wilson became the President's confidant, discussing with him many matters of state while submerging her own life in an attempt to keep him fit during the strain of a Presidency at war; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Wilson accompanied the President to Europe as the Allies conferred on terms of peace, which was the first such trip for a First Lady, and she is said to have played a political role, being compared, in some circles, to royalty; and

WHEREAS, following the President's debilitating stroke in 1919, Mrs. Wilson became his constant attendant and managed his personal affairs while screening matters of state before taking them to the bedridden President, thus emerging as one of the most influential and controversial women in U.S. history, being referred to as the "Secret President" and "First Woman President"; and

WHEREAS, in 1921, Mrs. Wilson retired with the former President to their home on S Street in Washington, D.C., nursing him until his death in 1924 and later served as director of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Wilson lived at their home on S Street until her death in 1961, leaving the house to the National Trust for Historic Preservation to be made into a museum honoring President Wilson; and

WHEREAS, Edith Bolling Wilson died on December 28, 1961, on what would have been President Wilson's 105th birthday, and is the only First Lady interred in the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., along with President Wilson; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Wilson was instrumental in the founding of what is now the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum in Staunton, Virginia; served as the first Honorary President of the Girl Scouts of America; was an ardent supporter of the Red Cross; was the inspiration for President Wilson's declaration of Mother's Day; and participated in President John F. Kennedy's inaugural parade; and

WHEREAS, the Edith Bolling Wilson Birthplace Foundation was founded by William J. and Farron

INTRODUCED

HJ98

59 W. Smith on October 15, 2005, to provide for the restoration of the Bolling Home as the birthplace and
60 childhood home of First Lady Edith Bolling Wilson, and to honor the First Lady's legacy, her
61 contributions to this country, and the resulting positive example and strong inspiration to women; and

62 WHEREAS, the anniversary of First Lady Edith Bolling Wilson's 140th birthday is an appropriate
63 time to reflect on her life and legacy; now, therefore, be it

64 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate
65 October 15, in 2012 and in each succeeding year, as First Lady Edith Bolling Wilson Day in Virginia;
66 and, be it

67 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution
68 to Mr. and Mrs. William J. Smith, the Edith Bolling Wilson Birthplace Foundation, the Town Council
69 of Wytheville, and the Wythe County Board of Supervisors, so that they may be apprised of the sense
70 of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

71 RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day
72 on the General Assembly's website.