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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 214

Offered March 1, 2012

*Celebrating the life of Edward James McPherson.*

Patron—Marsh

WHEREAS, Edward James McPherson, the fifth of nine siblings, was born on October 4, 1953, in Inverness, Mississippi, and transitioned to Heaven on July 4, 2011; and

WHEREAS, Edward James McPherson, affectionately known as "Ejay," was reared on Chicago's West Side in Rockwell Gardens, where he was lovingly nurtured and guided by his mother; as a youth, he worked on a milk truck and delivered newspapers, and these humbling life experiences and reliance on his mother's wisdom laid the foundation for his humility and later success; and

WHEREAS, a gifted thinker, athlete, and student, Edward James McPherson attended Phillips Academy Andover on full scholarship as a student of the "A Better Chance" program; during his attendance at the distinguished school, he was elected president of his tenth-grade class, and the news account of his historic election was published on the front page of the *New York Times* on June 11, 1969; he was a founding member and a dynamic leader of The Afro-American Society from 1970 to 1972, and his record for the long jump, which he set in 1972 during his senior year, has never been broken; and

WHEREAS, Edward James McPherson founded and served as acting director of (MS)2, "Mathematics and Science for Minority Students," at Phillips Academy Andover to offer minority scholars appropriate and rigorous challenges to better prepare them for college and careers in engineering, science, medicine, computers, and other technical fields; and

WHEREAS, after graduation from Phillips Academy Andover, Edward James McPherson received a special honorary award for his contributions to the Andover community; he attended the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned a bachelor of arts degree in literature in 1976, was president of the Black Student Union, and competed in the Penn relays; he earned his master's degree in 2009 from Virginia Tech while working toward his lifelong dream of earning a doctoral degree; and

WHEREAS, Edward James McPherson was active in the alumni councils at the University of Pennsylvania and Phillips Academy Andover and frequently visited the campuses to contribute to new programs for underprivileged minority youth; he delivered the keynote address in 2009 at the 40th reunion of the Af-Lat-Am Society at Phillips Academy Andover; and

WHEREAS, Edward James McPherson pursued a career in finance and banking at the Swiss Bank in New York City before relocating with his family to Roanoke, where he joined the Learning Technologies Group staff at Virginia Tech and served there for more than 10 years, specializing in K-12 outreach, instructional technology, and internal consulting for outreach program development; and

WHEREAS, Edward James McPherson was the principal planner for Virginia Tech's Faculty Development Institute (FDI), a program that provides a free computer and two to four days of training to more than 400 professors each summer, and in 2002, he was named Director of Virginia Tech's Summer Training Academy for Rising Students (VT STARS), a program that he created; and

WHEREAS, Edward James McPherson had a special love for technology and youth, and contributed to the use of technology by many minority programs and organizations, such as McNair Scholars, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Science (MANRRS), the Christiansburg Institute, and Virginia's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Commission; and

WHEREAS, Edward James McPherson used his keen knowledge of technology to help young people by applying Internet 2.0 technologies for mentoring youth and increasing their awareness of computational science; he diligently researched the sociology of education and explored community-based strategies for closing the minority achievement gap in science and technology to increase degree attainment by minorities; and

WHEREAS, an astute and brilliant expert in technology, Edward James McPherson addressed the National Science Foundation conference in July 2011 in Washington, D.C., was a member of the board of directors of the Science Museum of Western Virginia in Roanoke, worked with community-based initiatives in Philadelphia, Chicago, New York City, New Jersey, and Virginia, and was selected to serve as a Virginia Tech Multicultural Fellow of Virginia Tech's volunteer association of faculty and staff tasked with fostering a welcoming environment at the university; and

WHEREAS, Edward James McPherson was a faithful and committed husband and a proud and dedicated father who shared his love of sports, music, and scholarship with his daughters and encouraged and supported them in their endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Edward James McPherson faithfully instructed and "trained his daughters in the way

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59 that they should go," and taught them Psalm 23, his favorite scripture, which provided comfort and  
60 solace for his family after his death; and

61 WHEREAS, Edward James McPherson was simply "one-of-a-kind" to his family, friends, and  
62 colleagues, and they cherish his memory and are strengthened and assured by the promise that now he  
63 "dwells in the House of the Lord forever"; now, therefore, be it

64 RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby  
65 note with great sadness the loss of Edward James McPherson; and, be it

66 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for  
67 presentation to the family of Edward James McPherson as an expression of the General Assembly's  
68 respect for his memory.