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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 243

Offered March 5, 2012

Celebrating the life of Susie Beatrice Nickens James.

Patrons—Puckett and Marsh

WHEREAS, Susie Beatrice Nickens James, former First Lady of Virginia Union University, was born in segregated Richmond on April 4, 1919, and entered into eternal life on February 2, 2012; and

WHEREAS, Susie Beatrice Nickens James graduated from Armstrong High School, earned an undergraduate degree in mathematics from Virginia Union University in 1939, and was awarded the master of arts degree in guidance from Columbia University; and

WHEREAS, after graduation, she began a successful 20-year career in education with the Richmond Public Schools; Susie Beatrice Nickens James taught at George Mason Elementary School and served as a guidance counselor at Benjamin A. Graves Middle School and John Marshall High School; and

WHEREAS, Susie Beatrice Nickens James retired from Richmond Public Schools in 1974 to assume more responsibility as First Lady of Virginia Union University, where the love of her life, Dr. Allix Bledsoe James, was university president; and

WHEREAS, a model hostess and mentor, Susie Beatrice Nickens James became a "mother away from home" to many students, especially to African students; she was an exemplary role model who set high standards, nurtured self-esteem and taught students how to work together, and instilled in them basic life skills to lay a foundation for future success; and

WHEREAS, Susie Beatrice Nickens James was actively involved off-campus in numerous civic and community affairs, serving as a member and board chairman of the Virginia Capital Chapter of the American Red Cross and as the first African American to serve as the chapter's president; member of the State Council of Higher Education; board member of the Mathematics and Science Center Foundation; member of the North Richmond YMCA, the United Way of Greater Richmond, the Senior Citizens Association, the Greater Richmond Association of Retarded Citizens, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; president of the International Ministers' Wives of Richmond and Vicinity; and secretary of the Baptist Ministers' Wives of Richmond and Vicinity and of the Richmond Personnel and Guidance Association; she had active membership in three Richmond churches during her lifetime, most recently Ebenezer Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, her active role in community affairs resulted in many awards, honors, and accolades—the Clara Barton Award from the Virginia Capital Chapter of the American Red Cross for meritorious volunteer leadership, the Humanitarian Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1996, the Gye Nyame Ministries Award for work with African students, and the Liberian Association Award; the Virginia University of Lynchburg's fitness center is named in her honor; and

WHEREAS, Susie Beatrice Nickens James and her devoted husband loved traveling abroad, and their extensive travels included France, England, Egypt, Italy, Germany, Russia, Mexico, Spain, South Africa, China, the Caribbean, Bermuda, and the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, Susie Beatrice Nickens James wore many hats—First Lady of Virginia Union University, teacher, school guidance counselor, mentor, adoptive mother, churchwoman, community volunteer—and she was a true inspiration to her family, friends, students, and associates; she was a devoted partner to her husband, a loving mother, and loyal friend; and

WHEREAS, Susie Beatrice Nickens James leaves to mourn her passing a loving family and many friends who will miss sharing precious moments with her; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Susie Beatrice Nickens James; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Susie Beatrice Nickens James as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

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