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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 320

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled January 9, 2013

Commending Samuel Welford Hopkins, Sr., Congressional Gold Medalist.

Patron—McEachin

WHEREAS, Samuel Welford Hopkins, Sr., was born on January 10, 1926, in Philadelphia, and his life is characterized by commitment and service to others; and

WHEREAS, Samuel Welford Hopkins, Sr., attended Virginia Randolph Elementary School and Armstrong High School; and

WHEREAS, after President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 in 1941, which established the Fair Employment Practices Committee and mandated race-blind hiring by defense organizations, Samuel Welford Hopkins, Sr., became one of the nation's first African American Marine recruits to train at segregated Camp Montford Point in North Carolina, where African Americans trained until 1949 when troops were integrated; and

WHEREAS, in spite of the hardships of segregated facilities, Samuel Welford Hopkins, Sr., served his country valiantly and with distinction from 1942 to 1946 and was deployed to Saipan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and other locations; and

WHEREAS, after defending his country at war, Samuel Welford Hopkins, Sr., received an honorable discharge from the United States Marine Corps and returned home to the cruelty of Jim Crow; he began working for a local food distributor and later successfully started a family hauling business in 1951, in which he is still actively involved at age 86; and

WHEREAS, in June 2012, the bravery of Samuel Welford Hopkins, Sr., and his fellow African American Marines who served with him during the height of the harsh reality of segregation in World War II was recognized and honored with the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian honor bestowed by Congress; and

WHEREAS, the long overdue acknowledgment to the courageous African American Marines came 63 years after the closing of Camp Montford Point, and his fellow 367 veterans are the first African Americans in the Marine Corps to receive the Congressional Gold Medal, many posthumously; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Samuel Welford Hopkins, Sr., Congressional Gold Medalist; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Samuel Welford Hopkins, Sr., Congressional Gold Medalist, in order that he may be apprised of the gratitude and esteem of the General Assembly for his service and contributions to the nation and the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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