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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 187

Offered January 20, 2014

Celebrating the life of Vola Therrell Lawson.

Patrons—Krupicka, Brink, Bulova, Filler-Corn, Herring, Hope, James, Kory, LeMunyon, Lopez, Minchew, Morrissey, Plum, Sickles, Simon, Surovell, Torian and Watts; Senators: Barker, Ebbin and Saslaw

WHEREAS, Vola Therrell Lawson, who served as the first female city manager of Alexandria and was at the forefront of many critical issues the city faced, died on December 10, 2013; and

WHEREAS, community involvement was second nature to Vola Lawson; as a child in Atlanta, she observed her family's close work with the Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr., father of the noted civil rights leader; and

WHEREAS, Vola Lawson first came to the Washington, D.C., area to attend George Washington University; she became active in community affairs not long after moving to the Parkfairfax section of the city, helping to start her neighborhood's civic association; and

WHEREAS, before becoming a city employee in 1971, Vola Lawson joined the Urban League, which marked a lifelong effort to foster improved race relations in the city and eliminate discrimination; her first job was as assistant director for the Economic Opportunities Commission; and

WHEREAS, Vola Lawson was a passionate advocate for lower-income residents; she became Alexandria's assistant city manager for housing in 1981, responsible for millions of dollars' worth of redevelopment projects, including programs focusing on improved housing for the city's senior citizens and low-income families; and

WHEREAS, Vola Lawson was named acting city manager of Alexandria in 1985 and was appointed to the position eight months later after a nationwide search; she was the first woman to hold the top administrative job, and she admirably led the city until 2000; and

WHEREAS, other areas of civic life that benefitted from Vola Lawson's attention and interest include an emphasis on antipoverty programs and her dedication to animal rights; she worked closely with the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, which named its animal shelter in her honor; and

WHEREAS, as a breast cancer survivor, Vola Lawson founded an annual walk to fight breast cancer, the proceeds from which help subsidize mammograms for Alexandria's low-income residents; and

WHEREAS, Vola Lawson, who was predeceased by her husband, David, will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her sons, David, Peter, and MacArthur, and their families, and many other family members, friends, and colleagues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Vola Therrell Lawson, a dedicated public servant who worked tirelessly on behalf of the citizens of Alexandria; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Vola Therrell Lawson as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

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