

2014 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5247

Commemorating the life and legacy of Maggie L. Walker.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, September 18, 2014
Agreed to by the Senate, November 10, 2014

WHEREAS, Maggie L. Walker was born on July 15, 1864, in Richmond during the last year of the American Civil War; she married Armistead Walker, Jr., in 1886, raised two sons—Russell and Melvin—and lived in the Jackson Ward neighborhood of Richmond from 1901 until her death on December 15, 1934; and

WHEREAS, as a teenager, Maggie Walker became a member of the local council of the Independent Order of St. Luke, an organization that provided aid to the sick and the aged, helped families make burial arrangements, and promoted racial solidarity, and she established a newspaper known as the *St. Luke Herald* to promote the order's mission; and

WHEREAS, Maggie Walker established the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank in 1903 to benefit local African Americans, making her the first African American woman to found and charter a bank in the United States; under her leadership, St. Luke Penny Savings Bank merged with the Second Street Savings Bank to become the Consolidated Bank and Trust Company; and

WHEREAS, during her life, Maggie Walker also served as a founder and president of the Richmond Council of Colored Women, a member of the National Association of Wage Earners, a member of the National Urban League, and a cofounder of the Richmond branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and

WHEREAS, in the early 20th century, when Jim Crow laws disenfranchised African American citizens and codified racial segregation, Maggie Walker promoted social activism, civic engagement, and education as critical tactics for race and gender equality, and it was with these tactics that she would build a bridge from the Civil War, emancipation, and Reconstruction to the Civil Rights Movement; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the jobs she created, the loans she signed, and the enduring inspiration she offered to her community, Maggie Walker made deep and lasting contributions to the advancement of African American economic empowerment and financial independence; and

WHEREAS, Maggie Walker's role as the first African American woman to found and charter a bank in the United States and her membership in numerous civic groups during the late 19th century and early 20th century made her an integral and important part of the history of the City of Richmond, the Commonwealth, and the entire United States; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of Maggie Walker's contributions and accomplishments, a high school for African Americans in Richmond was named in her honor in 1938, and the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School was named in her honor in 2001; her work and achievements are studied by Virginia schoolchildren and included in Virginia's Standards of Learning in the Virginia Studies curriculum; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, Maggie Walker's Leigh Street home and surrounding structures in Jackson Ward were designated a national historic site by the United States Congress "for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States," and since 1979 the site has been operated by the National Park Service as the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site; and

WHEREAS, July 15, 2014, was the 150th anniversary of Maggie Walker's birth; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the life and legacy of Maggie L. Walker on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of her birth; and be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the superintendent of the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for Maggie L. Walker's inspirational legacy to generations of Virginians and Americans.

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