

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 275

Celebrating the life of Wendell Scott, Sr.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 15, 2015
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 23, 2015

WHEREAS, Wendell Scott, Sr., a highly talented driver and the first African American to win a NASCAR premier series event, who died on December 23, 1990, will be inducted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame with the class of 2015; and

WHEREAS, a native of Danville, Wendell Scott joined many of the other young men of his generation in service to his country with the United States Army during World War II; he returned from the war and used his experience as a mechanic to open a garage and later drove a taxi in the area; and

WHEREAS, fulfilling a longtime dream to become a stock car racer, Wendell Scott made his debut on the Dixie Circuit in 1952, winning his first race after only two weeks; with his obvious natural talent and tough, but smart, style of driving, he earned the respect and admiration of both fans and competitors; and

WHEREAS, courageously facing prejudice from organizers and lacking a major sponsor, Wendell Scott maintained his own vehicles, often raced with out-of-date equipment, and enlisted family members as his pit crew, which was led by his sons, Frank and Wendell, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, a determined competitor, Wendell Scott won the Dixie Circuit Virginia State Championship in 1959 and moved up to the Grand National Series (now Sprint Cup Series) in 1961; throughout his career, he made 495 starts, finished in the top five 20 times, and was a top 10 finisher 147 times; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, Wendell Scott became the first African American driver to win a race in what is now the Sprint Cup Series; starting in 15th place at Speedway Park in Jacksonville, Florida, he led the field for 27 laps and won by two full laps; and

WHEREAS, despite being initially denied the victory and never receiving the trophy, Wendell Scott continued to race until 1973; his best season came in 1966, when he finished sixth in points; and

WHEREAS, Wendell Scott's family was presented with a trophy for his victory in 2010, 20 years after his death in 1990, and his inspirational story has become the subject of numerous documentaries and biographies; he was inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in Talladega, Alabama, in 1999, and a historical marker commemorating his legacy was erected in Danville in 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Wendell Scott Foundation, founded by Wendell Scott's grandson, Warrick, and his siblings and cousins, works to honor his memory and legacy by establishing programs to serve and support at-risk youth in the Commonwealth, including educational and career initiatives; 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 Wendell Scott, Sr., an accomplished stock car racer and a beacon for social justice, on the occasion of his induction into the NASCAR Hall of Fame in 2015; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Wendell Scott, Sr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory and historic achievements.

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