

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 341

*Celebrating the life of the Honorable George W. Harris, Jr.*

Agreed to by the Senate, February 12, 2015  
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 2015

WHEREAS, the Honorable George W. Harris, Jr., a retired judge of the 23rd Judicial District of Virginia and a respected leader in the Roanoke community, died on January 23, 2015; and

WHEREAS, a native of Lynchburg, George Harris graduated from Dunbar High School; he was one of the first African American students to enroll at the University of Virginia and remained a proud Wahoos fan for the rest of his life; and

WHEREAS, George Harris transferred to Virginia Union University, where he became active in the civil rights movement and received a bachelor's degree; he went on to earn a law degree from North Carolina Central University; and

WHEREAS, after completing his education, George Harris practiced law in Roanoke, where he earned a reputation for his strong work ethic, commitment to justice, and concern for members of the community; and

WHEREAS, in 1985, George Harris was appointed as a judge of the Roanoke General District Court of the 23rd Judicial District of Virginia; he was the first full-time African American judge appointed in the Roanoke Valley; and

WHEREAS, throughout his 20-year career on the bench, George Harris was admired for his intelligence and ability to judge character; he presided with great fairness and wisdom until his well-earned retirement in 2005; and

WHEREAS, George Harris was a leader in the legal field and served as a member of many peer and professional organizations, as well as president of the Old Dominion Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, George Harris offered his time and wise leadership to civic and service organizations, including the City of Roanoke School Board, the Southwest Virginia Community Development Fund, the Roanoke Valley Council of Community Services, the William A. Hunton YMCA, and the Legal Aid Society of the Roanoke Valley; and

WHEREAS, a man of great integrity, George Harris served the Roanoke Valley and the Commonwealth with dedication and distinction, and he left a legacy of excellence for his fellow judges in the Roanoke Valley; and

WHEREAS, George Harris will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Helen; son George III, and his family; and numerous family members, friends, and colleagues; 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 the Honorable George W. Harris, Jr., a retired judge and an admired member of the Roanoke community; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of the Honorable George W. Harris, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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