

2016 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 162

Commending Dr. Katherine G. Johnson.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 29, 2016
Agreed to by the Senate, February 4, 2016

WHEREAS, Dr. Katherine G. Johnson of Hampton, a distinguished mathematician with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration who has been an integral member of the nation's space program for more than 30 years, received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is the nation's highest civilian honor, recognizes individuals who have made meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States; Dr. Katherine Johnson was selected for her exceptional leadership in the space program from Project Mercury to the modern shuttle program; and

WHEREAS, a native of White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, Dr. Katherine Johnson was a first-generation college student whose parents rented a house near West Virginia State University so she could complete her degree; exceptionally skilled in mathematics, she graduated college at the age of 18; and

WHEREAS, after relocating to Newport News in 1952, Dr. Katherine Johnson found employment at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Langley Research Center at a time when African American women were typically assigned to all-black computer pools; and

WHEREAS, within only weeks of starting, Dr. Katherine Johnson was asked to assist in the Spacecraft Dynamics Branch of the Flight Dynamics and Control Division, and her expertise would become crucial to every major American space program in the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Katherine Johnson calculated the trajectory for the first manned spaceflight by an American in 1961, verified the first flight calculation made by a computer for the first orbit of the earth by an American, and worked on Apollo 11's trajectory to the moon in 1969; she later worked on additional shuttle and satellite programs; and

WHEREAS, an inspirational leader, Dr. Katherine Johnson has encouraged young men and women throughout the United States to pursue careers in science, technology, and mathematics; she has earned numerous other awards and accolades for her service to the Commonwealth, the nation, and the field of space exploration; and

WHEREAS, throughout the course of her career, Dr. Katherine Johnson has received the NASA Lunar Orbiter Achievement Award, the NASA Apollo Team Group Achievement Award, three NASA Special Achievement Awards, an honorary Doctorate of Laws from the State University of New York, and honorary Doctor of Science degrees from Capitol College and Old Dominion University, and she was honored by the National Technical Association as Mathematician of the Year in 1997; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Katherine Johnson was presented the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack H. Obama at a special ceremony at the White House on November 24, 2015; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Dr. Katherine G. Johnson on receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her contributions to the American space program; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Dr. Katherine G. Johnson as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for her achievements in service to the nation.

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