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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 280

Offered February 9, 2016

Commending Robert Earl Hamlin.

Patron—Tyler

WHEREAS, Robert Earl Hamlin, a retired employee of Norfolk Southern Railway who was the first black chief dispatcher on the company's Pocahontas and Virginia railroad divisions, provided advice and guidance as a member and leader of the Sussex County Board of Supervisors from the time he assumed elected office in 2014 until the end of his term on December 31, 2015; and

WHEREAS, Robert Hamlin was born in Greensville County and moved to Reesetown in Sussex County when he was four; he grew up in the community near Jarratt and graduated from high school in 1971; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, Robert Hamlin began working as a clerk for the Norfolk and Western Railway, now known as Norfolk Southern Railway—a subsidiary of Norfolk Southern Corporation; during his early years with the railway company, Robert Hamlin married and started a family; and

WHEREAS, Robert Hamlin was a clerk and janitor for Norfolk and Western Railway in Hopewell, Jarratt, and Petersburg for 13 years; in 1985, he went to Crewe and became a train dispatcher for what had become Norfolk Southern Railway, and a few years later he was transferred to Roanoke when the rail company's operations were moved to a central location; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, Robert Hamlin was appointed the first black Chief Dispatcher on Norfolk Southern Railway's Pocahontas Division in Bluefield, West Virginia; he was transferred to Roanoke the following year and became the first black Chief Dispatcher on the Virginia Division; and

WHEREAS, over the years, Robert Hamlin assumed the title of First Chief Dispatcher (Super Chief) and was the first African American to hold that position; all train movements, rail operations, and personnel decisions on the Virginia Division of Norfolk Southern Railway were made under his authority; and

WHEREAS, Robert Hamlin retired from Norfolk Southern Railway in 2012 after an impressive 40-year career with one of the nation's premier transportation companies; he returned home to Sussex and was elected to the Sussex County Board of Supervisors in November 2013, representing the Henry District; and

WHEREAS, Robert Hamlin served with dedication and provided valuable leadership during his tenure on the Sussex County Board of Supervisors; he was elected vice chair and also served as chair of the board; and

WHEREAS, during his time as a member of the Sussex County Board of Supervisors, Robert Hamlin listened carefully to the questions and concerns of his constituents and always strove to do what was in the best interests of Sussex County; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Robert Earl Hamlin for his work and pioneering accomplishments during his career with Norfolk Southern Railway and for his dedicated service and leadership as a member of the Sussex County Board of Supervisors; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Robert Earl Hamlin as an expression of the General Assembly's respect and admiration for his many contributions to the people of Sussex County and the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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