

## 2016 SESSION

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### HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 72

Offered January 14, 2016

*Commemorating the life and legacy of Nathaniel Lee Hawthorne.*

Patrons—Wright and Tyler

WHEREAS, Nathaniel Lee Hawthorne, a passionate civil rights advocate who fought for justice and dignity for his fellow residents of Southside Virginia, died on June 9, 1975; and

WHEREAS, a lifelong resident of Lunenburg County, Nathaniel Hawthorne graduated from local public schools and Booker T. Washington Memorial Trade School; he joined many of the other young men of his generation in service to his country during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Nathaniel Hawthorne was a respected entrepreneur who served the community for many years as the owner of a radio and television repair shop in Kenbridge; he often performed work for free or for trade; and

WHEREAS, after attending the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Nathaniel Hawthorne was inspired to support civil rights in Southside Virginia; in 1965, he closed his business to participate in marches, pickets, boycotts, and demonstrations, including trips to Richmond and Boston, and more fully cooperate with other civil rights leaders throughout the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, in 1965 and 1966, Nathaniel Hawthorne worked with the Virginia Students' Civil Rights Committee to ensure that Title II of the Civil Rights Act, which allowed equal access to restaurants and businesses, was properly enforced; and

WHEREAS, as chair of the Lunenburg County NAACP from 1965 to 1974, Nathaniel Hawthorne was instrumental in the desegregation of local schools by encouraging members of the black community to enroll their children in previously all-white schools; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1960s, Nathaniel Hawthorne worked with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund to successfully contest tuition grant payments to segregated schools; and

WHEREAS, Nathaniel Hawthorne was also passionate about voting rights; he frequently led voting drives and convinced voting registrars in Lunenburg County to expand registration hours; and

WHEREAS, a courageous leader, Nathaniel Hawthorne never yielded in his fight for equality, dignity, and freedom for all residents of Southside Virginia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the life and legacy of Nathaniel Lee Hawthorne hereby be commemorated on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his death; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Nathaniel Lee Hawthorne as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his contributions to civil rights and respect for his memory.

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