

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 20

Celebrating the life of Martha E. Dawson.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 14, 2016
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 29, 2016

WHEREAS, Martha E. Dawson of Hampton, a distinguished and pioneering educator who held administrative positions at Virginia State University and Hampton University, a tenured faculty member at Indiana University, a person of great faith who was deeply involved in her community, and a devoted mother, grandmother, and friend, died on July 18, 2015; and

WHEREAS, Martha Dawson, who was born in Richmond, earned a bachelor's degree from Virginia State University and master's and doctoral degrees from Indiana University; she taught elementary school in Richmond and was supervisor of primary teachers for Richmond Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, known for her research on early education and her strongly held conviction that teachers need to be cognizant of their students' welfare, Martha Dawson presented research and published work that stressed the need for teachers to account for their pupils' emotional and social needs; and

WHEREAS, Martha Dawson made many contributions to education as a professor and administrator; she became the first African American woman to serve on the faculty of Indiana University, and in 1980 she received the university's Distinguished Alumni Service Award; and

WHEREAS, Martha Dawson was vice president for academic affairs at Hampton Institute, now Hampton University; she was a strong advocate for excellence in education and was a mentor to students, faculty, and administrators throughout her career; and

WHEREAS, Martha Dawson's many contributions to providing the best possible education for aspiring teachers was evident in her work at Virginia State University; she was dean of the School of Education and served as provost and vice president for academic affairs; and

WHEREAS, during her long and fruitful career, Martha Dawson received many honors for being an international leader in higher and elementary education; she was part of the Strong Men & Women in Virginia History celebration in 1999, which is an annual program that recognizes distinguished African American leaders in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Martha Dawson contributed her talents and energy to the National Conference of Christians and Jews, now known as the National Conference for Community and Justice; the Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast; and other clubs and professional organizations; and

WHEREAS, Martha Dawson's mission was to encourage and enable all people to obtain the best education possible; she had a gentle and caring manner as she endeavored—in both her professional and personal life—to promote excellence in education and the importance of doing one's very best; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by her son, James, and daughter, Greer, Martha Dawson will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by her daughter, Martina, and her family; and many family members, friends, colleagues, and former students; 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 Martha E. Dawson of Hampton, a distinguished educator, a person of great faith, and a devoted mother, grandmother, and friend; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Martha E. Dawson as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

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