

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 939

Celebrating the life of William Henry Anderson, Jr.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 17, 2017
 Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 2017

WHEREAS, William Henry Anderson, Jr., a descendant of freed slaves and resident of Charlottesville, was born on March 23, 1948, in Varina and departed this life on August 29, 2016; and

WHEREAS, William Anderson, a serious child, who loved to read and treasured two single-space spiral notebooks listing every book he had read since age six, attended a segregated Rosenwald school four months after the United States Supreme Court's ruling in Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), which desegregated the nation's public schools; and while attending the all-African American Gravel Hill and Henrico Central Elementary schools, he began to read and love Shakespearean works; and

WHEREAS, he attended the all-African American Virginia Randolph School in western Henrico County for two years before transferring to Varina High School in the tenth grade and becoming two of the school's first 11 African American students to enroll; and

WHEREAS, although a person who demonstrated immense resilience in the face of considerable challenges, William Anderson was excluded from the student body and expressed loneliness as the only African American student in many of his classes while attending Varina High School; he was one of the first African Americans to graduate from Varina High School, where he was in the National Thespian Society and the Quill and Scroll and the Beta Club honorary societies; and

WHEREAS, William Anderson earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 1970 and considered his professional career a sacred vocation that would give him an opportunity to share his religious beliefs and influence many young people and their families; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, on a four-year fellowship to The State University of New York at Stony Brook, William Anderson earned a doctorate in clinical psychology and completed postdoctoral studies in pediatric psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he served as an associate professor of psychology for seven years; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, he became an assistant professor at the University of Virginia's Institute of Clinical Psychology; from 1985 to 1996, he was associate professor and director of training at the University of Virginia Counseling Center, when the center merged with Student Mental Health to become Student Health Counseling and Psychological Services, where he served for 33 years until his retirement in 2014; as a licensed staff psychologist, William Anderson practiced individual and group therapy, supervised clinicians-in-training, and provided community outreach; and as the university grew more diverse, William Anderson's clinical work focused on multicultural issues, sexuality concerns, and the integration of spirituality and psychotherapy; and

WHEREAS, according to Groundwork RVA, a local affiliate of a national organization established to link communities in the pursuit of equity and sustainability, William Anderson boldly delivered a message of peace wherever he traveled and taught the organization's Green Team concerning the origin of Gravel Hill, a community of freed African American families that built schools, operated farms, and practiced free enterprise in Varina County before the onset of the American Civil War; and

WHEREAS, William Anderson loved singing and performed his first solo at age five at Gravel Hill Baptist Church in Henrico; as an adult, he sang professionally, using his rich tenor voice to sing with groups around the world, such as the Peace Commission, the MLK Community Choir, The Virginia Consort, and Zephyrus, a Charlottesville choral group, and other Charlottesville choral ensembles; he was also fluent in French and Spanish and toured 15 countries on peace missions, where he studied and traveled as a guest of Archbishop Desmond Tutu to deliver school supplies and a message of peace; and

WHEREAS, an adamant supporter of peace, he became a conscientious objector, and after presenting his case against the Vietnam War to draft officials, William Anderson was not drafted; and

WHEREAS, his membership at Trinity Episcopal Church in Charlottesville naturally led to his service as a member of the National Executive Committee of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, the Peace Commission for the Episcopal Church, and the National Council of the Fellowship of Reconciliation; William Anderson served as president of the Richmond Chapter of The Union of Black Episcopalians, and was an active member of the American Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy, the Association of Black Psychologists, the American Psychological Association, a lifetime member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), other professional and community organizations, and many national and international peace and justice organizations, including

founder of the Charlottesville Center for Peace and Justice, which he chaired until his death; and

WHEREAS, a man with a passion for living, William Anderson loved teaching and working with people, befriended persons of all racial, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, and mentored, counseled, and assisted thousands of students throughout his professional career and during his tenure at the University of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, William Anderson received the NAACP's Martin Luther King, Jr. Award and in 2014, he was given the University of Virginia's Serpentine Society's Outstanding Service Award for positive contributions to LGBTQ causes on campus; and

WHEREAS, lasting memories of William Anderson's unselfish service, commitment to students, and unmatched geniality will be cherished by his family, friends, churchmen, students, and colleagues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of William Henry Anderson, Jr.; 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 William Henry Anderson, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.