

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 235

Celebrating the life of Lelia Baum Hopper.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 12, 2017
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 20, 2017

WHEREAS, Lelia Baum Hopper, a native daughter and longtime advocate for juvenile justice and family law, passed away on April 28, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Lelia Hopper earned a bachelor's degree in English and political science from the Westhampton College of the University of Richmond and graduated from the Marshall-Wythe School of Law at The College of William and Mary; and

WHEREAS, Lelia Hopper spent her career serving the citizens of Virginia, first as Senior Attorney for the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services for the General Assembly's Division of Legislative Services; upon leaving the legislative branch of state government, she served in Governor Charles S. Robb's administration as Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Resources, and she later served as a consultant to various state agencies and as an adjunct faculty member at The College of William and Mary; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, Lelia Hopper began working in the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia, where as Executive Director of the Court Improvement Program she focused on improving the ability of the court system to manage and resolve cases of child abuse, child neglect, and foster care from February 1995 until her death; and

WHEREAS, during her long and illustrious legal career, Lelia Hopper served as staff to the Commission on the Future of Virginia's Judiciary from 1987 to 1989 and as director of the Family Court Project from 1989 to 1996; and

WHEREAS, Lelia Hopper was a longtime advocate of effective policies and programs for Virginia's children and families; she worked tirelessly and extensively with the General Assembly on child-related legislation and administered the Supreme Court's training and certification of guardians ad litem for children and incapacitated adults; she provided support and education for members of the judiciary, clerks of court, attorneys, and other child-welfare professionals throughout the Commonwealth on matters pertaining to dependency law, juvenile justice, family law, and best practices in the adjudication and administration of these types of cases in the court system; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, in recognition of her outstanding contributions to family law, Lelia Hopper received the Family Law Service Award from the Virginia State Bar's Family Law Section and was inducted as a Fellow of the Virginia Law Foundation; in 2015, the Virginia Council of Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judges established the "Lelia Baum Hopper Award" in her honor to recognize members of the judiciary who exemplify the qualities and passion for child welfare that were the cornerstones of her career; Lelia Hopper was presented with the inaugural award bearing her name in March 2016; and

WHEREAS, Lelia Hopper was a founding member and past chairman of the Board of Volunteer Emergency Families for Children and a former trustee of The Virginia Home in Richmond; and

WHEREAS, Lelia Hopper was devoted to her faith and family, and her greatest joy in life was working in the area of juvenile justice and family law; she was a tremendous and invaluable resource to the legal profession, and in her last days she remained steadfast in her commitment to the judiciary and her work on behalf of Virginia's most vulnerable families and children; and

WHEREAS, Lelia Hopper's legacy of care and commitment to Virginia's most vulnerable families and their children will be cherished and remembered by her family, friends, and colleagues; 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 Lelia Baum Hopper; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Lelia Baum Hopper as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude for her service to the Commonwealth and respect for her memory.