

2017 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 264

Commending Nancy Garrett Witt, M.D.

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

WHEREAS, Nancy Garrett Witt, M.D., of Stuarts Draft, dedicated her life to the psychiatric treatment of adults and children as the director of a state run mental health facility in Staunton; and

WHEREAS, a native of Vinton, Nancy Witt graduated from William Byrd High School and earned a degree from Roanoke College; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Witt graduated 13th in her class at the Medical College of Virginia, now VCU Medical Center, in 1955, when few women were admitted to medical schools in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 1956, Dr. Witt was the first and only woman physician in the Rockfish Valley of rural Nelson County to operate a medical office and make residential house calls; and

WHEREAS, in 1958, Dr. Witt became a staff psychiatric physician at DeJarnette State Sanatorium in Staunton and, 10 years later, was promoted to the facility's director, making her the first woman director of a state operated mental health facility in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, under Dr. Witt's management, DeJarnette State Sanatorium became the only self-supporting state mental health facility in the country, contributing positively to the General Fund of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Witt gained a reputation for embracing new treatments and unique approaches to psychiatric issues, such as mega-dose vitamin therapy in conjunction with tranquilizers to treat schizophrenia; and

WHEREAS, in the 1970s, Dr. Witt oversaw DeJarnette State Sanatorium's transition to the DeJarnette Center for Human Development, known today as the Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents, a nationally known program for treating children with severe behavior disorders; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure as director, Dr. Witt focused heavily on education and community outreach, developing teacher training programs through affiliations with Mary Baldwin College, the University of Virginia, James Madison University, Bridgewater College, and working with local school teachers to address behavior problems in public schools; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Witt's work, especially the comprehensive behavior modification programs she developed, has been admired and duplicated by psychologists around the country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Nancy Garrett Witt, M.D., on her years of service as director of a state run mental health facility in Staunton; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Nancy Garrett Witt, M.D., as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for her life's work.

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