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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 327

Offered January 20, 2017

*Celebrating the life of Dr. Debra Saunders-White.*

Patron—Locke

WHEREAS, Dr. Debra Saunders-White, a community leader and consummate educator who inspired countless young men and women and made history as the first female chancellor of North Carolina Central University, died on November 26, 2016; and

WHEREAS, a native of Iowa, Debra Saunders-White grew up in Hampton and graduated from Kecoughtan High School, where she was a standout member of the track and field team; a passionate lifelong learner, she earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia, a master's degree from The College of William and Mary, and a doctorate from The George Washington University; and

WHEREAS, Debra Saunders-White pursued a distinguished 15-year career with IBM, taught mathematics at St. George's School in Rhode Island, held leadership positions at Hampton University and the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, and served as assistant secretary in the Office of Postsecondary Education for the United States Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, as a first-generation college graduate, Debra Saunders-White understood how a good education can enhance the lives of young people and lay the seeds for a bright future for the entire nation; she fulfilled her lifelong dream to become a college president in 2013, when she became the first female chancellor of North Carolina Central University, a public, historically black university in Durham, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Debra Saunders-White treated students and colleagues alike with respect and dignity and took the time to build unique, personal connections with students; under her leadership, North Carolina Central University achieved high national rankings and was named the 2016 HBCU of the Year by *HBCU Digest*; and

WHEREAS, Debra Saunders-White also worked to enhance the community as a member of The Links, Incorporated, and she was a lifelong member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, beginning with the Theta Kappa chapter at the University of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Debra Saunders-White will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her children, Elizabeth and Cecil; her mother, Irene; and numerous other family members and friends; 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 Dr. Debra Saunders-White, a respected community leader, educator, and college administrator; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Dr. Debra Saunders-White as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.