

2017 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 340

Designating April 23, in 2018 and in each succeeding year, as Barbara Johns Day in Virginia.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 7, 2017

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 21, 2017

WHEREAS, Barbara Johns played a unique role in the early years of the Civil Rights movement by leading the only student protest associated with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Johns was educated in segregated public schools in Prince Edward County and attended R. R. Moton High School in Farmville, which was designed to house 180 students but enrolled close to double that number; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Johns and other students at R. R. Moton High School struggled with leaky ceilings and freezing cold in the winters; parents of black students appealed to the all-white school board, which constructed tar paper shacks to handle the overflow of students; and

WHEREAS, frustrated by the school board's lack of action regarding the unequal facilities, Barbara Johns, then a 16-year-old junior at R. R. Moton High School, met with several classmates and planned a student strike to protest the difficult conditions; and

WHEREAS, on April 23, 1951, Barbara Johns delivered a memorandum to teachers announcing a special assembly, and when teachers and students arrived at the assembly, they were surprised to find Barbara Johns preparing to reveal her plan for the strike; and

WHEREAS, the students of R. R. Moton High School agreed to participate in the protest, and Barbara Johns and her fellow strike leaders met with the school superintendent to inform him of the protest and demand a new school; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Johns also sought legal counsel from the NAACP, which agreed to provide assistance as long as a lawsuit would challenge the segregated school system; the ensuing case of *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* reached the Supreme Court of the United States along with four other similar cases and formed the basis of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling; and

WHEREAS, *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* was the only school integration case initiated by a student strike, making Barbara Johns a pioneer in the peaceful protests that were a hallmark of the Civil Rights movement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate April 23, in 2018 and in each succeeding year, as Barbara Johns Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the family of Barbara Johns so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.

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