

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 391

Celebrating the life of Adelaide Marie Payne Griffin.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 16, 2017
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 2017

WHEREAS, Adelaide Marie Payne Griffin, the elder of twin girls, was born on March 30, 1922, in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and passed into eternal rest on April 16, 2016, having lived her entire adult life in Farmville, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Adelaide Griffin graduated from Atlantic City High School in 1939; after high school, she and her twin sister, Grace, worked two years to earn funds to supplement their parents' college savings for them, and they took jobs together during the early years of World War II; Adelaide Griffin earned a bachelor's degree from Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1946; the bond between the sisters was unique and unbreakable; together they attended Shaw University and pledged Alpha Phi Alpha Sorority, the oldest African American sorority in the nation; and

WHEREAS, while still in high school, Adelaide Griffin met the pioneering African American educator Dr. Rachel Weddington, whose style, intelligence, and presence inspired her to become a teacher; Adelaide Griffin was noted as saying to family and friends, "I knew from the moment I met Dr. Weddington, I would be a teacher"; after graduation from college, she taught briefly in Pinehurst, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Adelaide Griffin was a dynamic person who cherished reading and loved art, music, sewing, cooking, and sharing everything with her beloved sister, Grace; the twins delighted in playing pranks on people, eventually including their own children, by each pretending to be the other; and

WHEREAS, in November 1946, Adelaide Griffin married the Reverend Leslie Francis Griffin, pastor of the historic First Baptist Church, Farmville, and the esteemed spiritual leader who led the civil rights movement in Prince Edward County during Massive Resistance, whom she met while both were students at Shaw University; from their 34-year union were born six children, whom they were blessed to see grow into adulthood; she instilled in them an appreciation for reading and learning, a love of the arts, and an understanding of the benefits of hard work; and

WHEREAS, Adelaide Griffin loved her children unconditionally and did not have preconceived molds for them; a mentor and confidant to her children, she recognized their individuality and unique gifts and guided each child in finding his special niche; and

WHEREAS, Adelaide Griffin returned to teaching in 1963 with the Prince Edward County Free Schools and was employed by the Prince Edward County Public Schools from 1971 until her retirement in 1988; she applied the same approach to teaching as she took in rearing her children, fervently believing that every person was given a gift by God meant to be used during his lifetime; she loved teaching and nurturing her students and often said, "I was called to teach, just as my husband was called to preach"; and

WHEREAS, Adelaide Griffin was a devout Christian woman, a loving and devoted wife, the consummate mother, a talented artist, and an extraordinary teacher; she relished collecting cookbooks, McCall's sewing patterns, Singer sewing machines, classical music, children's books, and albums by Paul Robeson, Mahalia Jackson, and Marian Anderson; and

WHEREAS, as First Lady of First Baptist Church, Farmville, she devoted her time, talent, and resources to the church, especially the missionary circles, supporting the civil rights work of her husband and helping others who were the beneficiaries of her generosity and kind and loving spirit; and

WHEREAS, Adelaide Griffin was a beautiful, elegant, and loving lady who exemplified the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:10-31 and was always willing to help others; her faith in God was unwavering and steadfast; she was fond of saying that "when faced with any difficulty in life, I let my fingers do the walking through the pages of the Bible until I find a passage that will guide my actions"; therefore, she shared her faith with her children and taught them and others to take difficult decisions to "the Lord in prayer"; and

WHEREAS, the memory and legacy of Adelaide Griffin will be cherished by her family, loved ones, and friends, and "may she rest from her labors, and her works do follow her"; 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 Adelaide Marie Payne Griffin, widow of the Reverend Leslie Francis Griffin; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Adelaide Marie Payne Griffin as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.