

2017 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 123

Celebrating the life of Thomas Edward Graves, Jr.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 2, 2017

WHEREAS, Thomas Edward Graves, Jr., a passionate advocate for civil rights and a respected entrepreneur who served countless families in Norfolk with dignity and grace as the owner of Graves Funeral Home, died on January 13, 2017; and

WHEREAS, a native of Roper, North Carolina, Thomas "Tom" Graves graduated with honors from J. J. Clemmons High School and joined many of the other young men of his generation in service to the nation as a member of the United States Army during World War II; and

WHEREAS, after his honorable military service, Tom Graves returned to the United States and continued his education at Echols College of Mortuary Science in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, completing a two-year program in one year with honors; and

WHEREAS, possessed of an entrepreneurial spirit, Tom Graves opened Graves Funeral Home on June 15, 1953; it was the first establishment of its kind designed specifically to serve the African American community in the area; and

WHEREAS, now in its third generation of family ownership, Graves Funeral Home has provided compassionate care to countless grieving families, and Tom Graves served as a trusted mentor to many other aspiring funeral directors in Norfolk; and

WHEREAS, an active supporter of the Civil Rights movement, Tom Graves used his exceptional skills as a leader and organizer to make many lasting contributions to the residents of Norfolk and helped to elect the first African American to the Norfolk City Council; and

WHEREAS, Tom Graves will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife of 67 years, Mildred; children, Tommy and Lorraine, and their families; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Thomas Edward Graves, Jr., a well-known Norfolk business owner and an admired community leader who touched countless lives in the region; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Thomas Edward Graves, Jr., as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.

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