

## 2018 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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### SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 203

Offered February 27, 2018

*Celebrating the life of Grace Victoria Edmondson Harris.*

Patrons—McClellan, Dance and Spruill; Delegates: Aird, Bagby, Bourne, Carroll Foy, Hayes, Jones, J.C., Lindsey, Price and Rasoul

WHEREAS, Grace Victoria Edmondson Harris, a compassionate social worker and a respected leader at Virginia Commonwealth University, died on February 12, 2018; and

WHEREAS, Grace Harris grew up in Halifax County and began developing her passion for lifelong learning at a young age; she graduated from Hampton Institute with highest honors in 1954; and

WHEREAS, Grace Harris applied to the Richmond Professional Institute during the beginning of massive resistance to school integration in the Commonwealth; denied entry, she instead attended Boston University, where she studied alongside the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, in 1959, Grace Harris reapplied to the Richmond Professional Institute, now known as Virginia Commonwealth University, to complete her master's degree and was accepted; she was later hired as one of the first African American professors at the University; and

WHEREAS, Grace Harris earned a second master's degree and a doctorate from the University of Virginia in the 1970s, but spent much of her career at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she served as dean of social work, two-time acting president, and the first African American woman provost at the university; and

WHEREAS, Grace Harris earned the admiration of her colleagues for her visionary, decisive leadership and her commitment to ensuring that all voices and viewpoints were heard; in recognition of her exceptional contributions to the University, the Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute was named in her honor; and

WHEREAS, Grace Harris will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her husband, James; her children, Gayle and James, Jr., and their families; grandson, Jullian; her siblings, William, Marian, and Mamye; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues; 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 Grace Victoria Edmondson Harris, a leader in higher education and social work; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Grace Victoria Edmondson Harris as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

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