

2018 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 203

Celebrating the life of Grace Victoria Edmondson Harris.

Agreed to by the Senate, March 6, 2018
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 7, 2018

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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