

2019 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 836

Offered February 6, 2019

Commending Ruth Coles Harris.

Patrons—McQuinn, Adams, D.M., Carr, Delaney, Hope, Kory, Landes, Rasoul, Rodman and Ware;
Senators: Ebbin, Howell, McClellan and Spruill

WHEREAS, Ruth Coles Harris, a visionary educator and trailblazing leader for women in business, was honored on September 29, 2018, with the unveiling of the Ruth Coles Harris Leadership Institute at Virginia Union University's Sydney Lewis School of Business; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Virginia State College and New York University, Ruth Harris began her career as an educator and strove to inspire her students by pursuing certification as a public accountant; in 1962, she became the first African American woman certified public accountant (CPA) in Virginia, at a time when there were fewer than 100 African American CPAs in the entire country; and

WHEREAS, after earning a doctorate from The College of William & Mary in 1977, Ruth Harris joined the faculty of Virginia Union University, where she taught for many years and oversaw the creation of the Sydney Lewis School of Business from the university's commerce department; and

WHEREAS, as the founding director of the Sydney Lewis School of Business, Ruth Harris used her lifetime of expertise to develop the school's comprehensive curriculum and helped grow enrollment to more than 400 students; she retired as distinguished professor emerita in 1997; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Harris offered her leadership to several state commissions and the boards of directors for numerous local, state, and national organizations, earning recognition as one of eight women selected for the 2015 Virginia Women in History program at the Library of Virginia, among many other awards and accolades; and

WHEREAS, the Sydney Lewis School of Business launched the Ruth Coles Harris Leadership Institute (RCHLI) to celebrate her valuable contributions to Virginia Union University and the professions of business and accounting; and

WHEREAS, the RCHLI perpetuates Ruth Harris' legacy of excellence by deepening the understanding of business, accounting, and entrepreneurship through lectures, workshops, seminars, and certificate programs and working with faculty in other disciplines and members of the community to create unique opportunities for all participants; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Ruth Coles Harris, the inspirational namesake of the new Ruth Coles Harris Leadership Institute at Virginia Union University's Sydney Lewis School of Business; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Ruth Coles Harris as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for her personal and professional achievements in service to her students and the Commonwealth.

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