

2019 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 840

Celebrating the life of Walter T. Kenney, Sr.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 11, 2019
Agreed to by the Senate, February 14, 2019

WHEREAS, Walter T. Kenney, Sr., a respected labor leader and public servant who strengthened the Richmond community as a longtime member of the Richmond City Council and an esteemed former mayor, died on January 28, 2019; and

WHEREAS, a proud native of Richmond, Walter Kenney graduated from Armstrong High School and served his country as a member of the United States Army during the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, after his honorable military service, Walter Kenney continued to serve the community as a postal worker and went on to become the first African American to lead a postal union in the southern United States when he was elected president of the Virginia chapter of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO; and

WHEREAS, Walter Kenney was subsequently elected as a vice president of the American Postal Workers Union in 1970, becoming the first African American to hold a national office in a labor organization; and

WHEREAS, in 1977, Walter Kenney was elected to the first African American-majority City Council in Richmond history and ably represented the residents of the 6th District, which included Highland Park, the East End, and parts of downtown; and

WHEREAS, Walter Kenney was elected as mayor by his fellow Richmond City Council members in 1990 and served two terms until his retirement from public office in 1994; and

WHEREAS, during his long tenure on the Richmond City Council, Walter Kenney led racial reconciliation efforts, opened more city jobs to African Americans, and supported development projects designed to revitalize downtown Richmond and enhance community services; and

WHEREAS, admired for his authenticity, integrity, and unfailing kindness toward others, Walter Kenney earned a reputation as a true gentleman who worked to build mutual respect and consensus across racial, political, and regional lines; and

WHEREAS, Walter Kenney enjoyed fellowship and worship with the community as a lifelong member of St. John Baptist Church in Richmond, where he served as chair of the church's trustee ministry; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his wife of 41 years, Mamie, Walter Kenney will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his children, Wilma, Marvette, and Walter, Jr., and their families, and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Walter T. Kenney, Sr., a trailblazer for African American leaders in the Commonwealth and the United States; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Walter T. Kenney, Sr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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