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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 866

Offered February 8, 2019

Commending Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center.

Patrons—Price, Mullin and Yancey; Senators: Locke, Mason and Norment

WHEREAS, the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center, a multi-purpose cultural space in Newport News, celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center held its grand opening in 2008, but the building that houses the center, at 2410 Wickham Avenue, has functioned as a community structure since 1918; it has been a high school, an elementary school, an emergency hospital during the Spanish Influenza outbreak, and a library; and

WHEREAS, the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center was named after Norvleate Downing-Gross, a passionate community leader in Newport News, who served as program director of the Phillis Wheatley YWCA, the executive secretary of the Peninsula Coordinating Committee, and the executive director for the Newport News Office of Human Affairs from its inception in 1964 until her death; and

WHEREAS, today the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center is operated by the Parks, Recreation and Tourism department of the City of Newport News; it houses the 276-seat Ella Fitzgerald Theater and the Anderson Johnson Gallery showcasing art by Johnson inspired by his faith mission; programs at the Center include musical shows, a steel drum performance group, youth photography classes, dance classes, adult painting classes, and more; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center has celebrated student, local, national, and international artists and cultivated the arts with their events, workshops, concerts featuring national and local acts, theatrical productions, and much more, in an inclusive and visionary space; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center, a multi-purpose cultural space in Newport News, for celebrating its 10th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its commitment to preserving, cultivating, and presenting the arts in Newport News.

INTRODUCED

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