SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 410

Celebrating the life of Mary E. Onley.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 18, 2019
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 19, 2019

WHEREAS, Mary E. Onley of Painter, an acclaimed folk artist known for her papier-mâché sculptures and colorful paintings, died on August 18, 2018; and

WHEREAS, Mary Onley, affectionately known as Mama Girl, was born and raised on the Eastern Shore to a family of farm laborers and started working in the fields herself at the age of 12; she had to stop because of severe allergies which resulted in numerous hospitalizations; and

WHEREAS, during one particularly grave medical episode, Mama Girl reported being visited by a spirit who instructed her to create art from paper and other found objects-something she had never attempted before; 20 years later, her work made her one of the most celebrated folk artists on the East Coast; and

WHEREAS, Mama Girl's work was shown at craft fairs across the Mid-Atlantic and is a favorite of many folk art collectors; she continued to credit every piece to the spirit who visited her in her studio each day; and

WHEREAS, the many subjects in Mama Girl's colorful artwork varied, from paintings of Biblical themes, including Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Jonah and the whale, and the Last Supper, to papier-mâché watermelon-colored angels and sculptures of cats, crabs, and cardinals; and

WHEREAS, Mama Girl will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her children and their families, as well as numerous other family members, friends, and fans; 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 Mary E. Onley of Painter, acclaimed folk artist known for her papier-mâché sculptures and colorful paintings; and, be it

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