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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 166

Offered January 24, 2020

Celebrating the life of the Honorable Mary T. Christian.

Patron—Ward

WHEREAS, the Honorable Mary T. Christian, a respected educator and a dedicated public servant who represented Hampton residents in the Virginia House of Delegates for 14 years, died on November 11, 2019; and

WHEREAS, Mary Christian grew up in Hampton and graduated from Phenix High School, where she was a member of the basketball, drama, and debate teams, as well as the National Honor Society; and

WHEREAS, Mary Christian completed typing courses while working in the laundry at Hampton University and was eventually accepted for a secretarial position; she continued her studies while working for the university and earned a bachelor's degree in 1955; and

WHEREAS, a passionate lifelong learner, Mary Christian subsequently earned a master's degree from Columbia University and a doctorate from Michigan State University; and

WHEREAS, Mary Christian pursued a career as an educator with Hampton City Public Schools and Hampton University; she was the first African American member of the Hampton City School Board, and in 1980, she was selected as dean of Hampton University's School of Education; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service to the Hampton community and the Commonwealth, Mary Christian ran for and was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1985, becoming the first African American woman to represent the residents of the 92nd District; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure as a state delegate, Mary Christian introduced and supported many important pieces of legislation to benefit all Virginians, taking a special interest in education and health care; and

WHEREAS, Mary Christian offered her wisdom to the House Committee on Appropriations, the House Committee on Education, and the Joint Rules Committee; and

WHEREAS, Mary Christian was a life member of the Hampton branch of the NAACP and an honorary board member of the National Patient Advocate Foundation, and she enjoyed fellowship and worship with the community as a life member of First Baptist Church of Hampton; and

WHEREAS, Mary Christian received several awards and accolades for her contributions to the field of education and commitment to community service, including the Distinguished Service Award from the National Patient Advocate Foundation; she was named as a professor emeritus at Hampton University, and her legacy of excellence lives on in the thousands of students she mentored and inspired; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by her son, James, Mary Christian will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her husband, Wilbur; her daughters, Benita and Carolyn, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues on both sides of the aisle; 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 the Honorable Mary T. Christian; 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 the Honorable Mary T. Christian as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

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