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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 195

Offered February 6, 2020

Commemorating the life and legacy of Dr. Robert Russa Moton.

Patrons—Hodges, Edmunds, Adams, D.M., Adams, L.R., Aird, Avoli, Bagby, Batten, Bell, Bloxom, Bourne, Brewer, Bulova, Byron, Campbell, R.R., Carr, Carter, Cole, J.G., Cole, M.L., Collins, Cox, Coyner, Davis, Fowler, Freitas, Gilbert, Head, Heretick, Herring, Hope, Jenkins, Keam, Kilgore, Knight, LaRock, Leftwich, Levine, Lindsey, Lopez, Marshall, McGuire, McNamara, McQuinn, Morefield, O'Quinn, Orrock, Plum, Price, Rasoul, Reid, Robinson, Roem, Runion, Rush, Samirah, Sickles, Simon, Simonds, Torian, Tyler, VanValkenburg, Walker, Wampler, Ware, Watts, Webert, Willett, Wilt, Wright and Wyatt; Senators: Edwards, Howell, McDougle, Peake, Reeves, Ruff and Spruill

WHEREAS, Dr. Robert Russa Moton, one of the most prominent African American educators of the 20th century and a native of Virginia, died on May 31, 1940; and

WHEREAS, born in Amelia County and raised in Prince Edward County, Robert Moton graduated from Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in 1890, whereafter he served as commandant of the school's male cadet corps for nearly 25 years; and

WHEREAS, Robert Moton was actively involved in several organizations dedicated to improving the lives of African Americans; he was elected president of the National Negro Business League in 1900; became trustee of the Anna T. Jeanes Fund, which supported the development of schools for African Americans in rural areas, in 1908; and founded the Negro Organization Society of Virginia, with the mission to improve African American communities, in 1912; and

WHEREAS, Robert Moton was selected to serve as principal of the Tuskegee Institute, one of the nation's leading universities for African Americans, after its founder and first principal, the renowned educator Booker T. Washington, died in 1915; and

WHEREAS, as head of the Tuskegee Institute for two decades, Robert Moton contributed to the continued development of the institution, overseeing the construction of new buildings, the incorporation of liberal arts into the historically vocational curriculum, the creation of degree programs in agriculture and education, the improvement of the faculty and administrative staff, and the growth of the school's endowment; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his leadership and expertise, Robert Moton served as advisor to several United States presidents; he was asked by President Woodrow Wilson to report on the living conditions and morale of African American soldiers during World War I and appointed by President Herbert Hoover to serve on the United States Commission on Education in Haiti; and

WHEREAS, widely considered one of the leading African American intellectuals of his time, Robert Moton was selected by former President and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court William Howard Taft to give the keynote address at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922; and

WHEREAS, for his efforts to serve African Americans and improve race relations, Robert Moton received numerous honorary degrees and awards throughout his lifetime, including honorary degrees from Harvard University and Howard University and the prestigious Spingarn Medal from the NAACP in 1930; and

WHEREAS, Robert Moton will be forever remembered for improving African American communities and their access to education in the early 20th century, laying a foundation that would facilitate even greater progress years later; today, his legacy lives on through the restoration and maintenance of his retirement home in Gloucester, now owned and operated by The Gloucester Institute, which was founded by Virginia natives Charles and Kay James; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the life and legacy of Dr. Robert Russa Moton, one of the foremost African American public figures and educators in the first half of the 20th century, on the 80th anniversary of his death; 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 Dr. Robert Russa Moton as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his achievements.

INTRODUCED

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