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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 299

Offered February 21, 2020

Celebrating the life of Vernon Lee Gordon, Sr.

Patrons—Hayes; Senator: Spruill

WHEREAS, Vernon Lee Gordon, Sr., a trailblazing law-enforcement officer in Hamptons Roads and a devoted member of Jesus Church of Deliverance who helped the congregation grow and thrive, died on October 31, 2019; and

WHEREAS, born in what was formerly Norfolk County, Vernon Gordon attended a one-room schoolhouse in the Green Sea area and dropped out of school after eighth grade to help support his family as a hotel elevator operator and busboy; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Gordon subsequently worked at a chemical factory, a supermarket, and two local banks until a custodian position opened at the Chesapeake City Jail; after four years, he broke down barriers as the first African American deputy sheriff in city history; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Gordon rose through the ranks to become a captain in the Chesapeake Sheriff's Office and used his position to strengthen the community by helping local residents find jobs at the jail and striving to reduce recidivism; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure with the Chesapeake Sheriff's Office, Vernon Gordon earned an associate's degree in police science from Tidewater Community College and served as a player on and coach of the department's softball team; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Gordon joined the Norfolk Sheriff's Office as undersheriff in 1993 and retired from law enforcement as a colonel in 1998; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Gordon played a vital role in the establishment of Jesus Church of Deliverance, which held worship services in the Gordon family's garage in its early days; he took an active role as a Sunday school teacher, ultimately becoming superintendent of the program in 1984; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, Vernon Gordon helped Jesus Church of Deliverance acquire land on Jones Lane in Chesapeake for a permanent sanctuary and personally oversaw construction as chair of the building committee; thanks in large part to his tireless efforts, the congregation completed the new building without incurring debt; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Gordon became the head trustee and chair of the deacon board in 2004 and continued to expand church property, acquiring nearby land for the construction of the JDC Family Life Center; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his wife of 64 years, Catherine, and a daughter, Wanda, Vernon Gordon will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his children, Cynthia, Valerie, Sherry, Vernon, Jr., Shawn, and Andre, 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 Vernon Lee Gordon, Sr., a dedicated law-enforcement officer and champion for the congregation of Jesus Church of Deliverance; 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 Vernon Lee Gordon, Sr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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