

20106203D

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 361

Offered February 27, 2020

Celebrating the life of Paule Marshall.

Patrons—Carr, Adams, D.M., Cole, M.L., Delaney, Heretick, Hope, Krizek, McQuinn, Rasoul, Ware and Willett; Senators: Ebbin, Hashmi, Howell and McClellan

WHEREAS, Paule Marshall of Richmond, a luminary author who highlighted the experiences of women, African Americans, and Caribbean migrants through her passionate, lyrical prose, died on August 12, 2019; and

WHEREAS, born Valenza Pauline Burke, Paule Marshall changed her name in later life, fearing that her given name would impact her employment prospects; as the daughter of Barbadian immigrants in New York City, her personal understanding of issues related to race, gender, and cultural identity influenced much of her work; and

WHEREAS, Paule Marshall attended Hunter College for one year, but was forced to withdraw due to an illness; she returned to her studies at Brooklyn College, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1952; and

WHEREAS, after working as a researcher for a magazine, Paule Marshall published her first and most well-known work, *Brown Girl, Brownstones* in 1959; the novel garnered national and international acclaim and is considered by some as the beginning of contemporary African American women's literature; and

WHEREAS, Paule Marshall served as a bridge between African American novelists of the early 20th century like Richard Wright and Zora Neale Hurston and more modern authors such as Toni Morrison and Alice Walker; and

WHEREAS, Paule Marshall infused her writing with strength, dignity, clear vision, and a powerful sense of purpose; her other notable works include *Soul Clap Hands and Sing* in 1961, *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* in 1969, and *Praisesong for the Widow* in 1983; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1984, Paule Marshall taught English and creative writing at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she helped create opportunities for students by bringing other eminent African American authors to campus; she taught at other institutions around the nation and held the Helen Gould Sheppard Chair of Literature and Culture at New York University; and

WHEREAS, Paule Marshall received many awards and accolades throughout her career, including a 1961 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 1992 MacArthur Fellowship, and the 2009 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award; and

WHEREAS, Paule Marshall will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her son, Evan, and his family; her stepdaughter and her family; 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 Paule Marshall, a highly admired author in Richmond; 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 Paule Marshall as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

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