

2020 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 473

Offered March 2, 2020

Celebrating the life of Mildred DeBell.

Patron—Helmer

WHEREAS, Mildred DeBell, celebrated historian of Centreville and a beloved member of the community, died on January 20, 2020; and

WHEREAS, raised in Fishers Hill near Winchester, Mildred DeBell moved to Centreville in 1938 to teach first grade at Centreville Elementary School; after a brief stint teaching fourth grade in Bailey's Crossroads, she returned to Centreville to teach seventh grade part-time during World War II; and

WHEREAS, until the late 1950s, Mildred DeBell and her husband, Stuart, ran a dairy farm called Sunnyside on property owned by the DeBell family since the 1870s; later, the DeBell family ran the Newgate Inn, a Centreville institution that attracted visitors from locales far and wide, for many years; and

WHEREAS, an avid and accomplished gardener, in 1950, Mildred DeBell helped found the Rocky Run Garden Club, contributing to the beautification of Centreville and performing other worthwhile civic activities; and

WHEREAS, many residents of Centreville will remember Mildred DeBell best for the captivating historical displays she presented at Centreville Day year after year; using a trove of historical records and artifacts she discovered at the DeBell farmhouse, Mildred DeBell helped countless individuals better understand the community they lived in and appreciate its history; and

WHEREAS, in honor of the value she brought to the community, Fairfax County Sully District Supervisor Michael Frey named Mildred DeBell the Sully District's honorary Lady Fairfax in 2003; further accolades were extended in October 2017, when she was elected Centreville Day's Citizen of the Year and its Honored Community Historian; and

WHEREAS, guided throughout life by her deep and abiding faith, Mildred DeBell was an active member of St. John's Episcopal Church in Centreville since 1938, where she enjoyed worship and fellowship with her community while directing the choir and playing the organ; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by her husband, Stuart, Sr., and her son, Stephen, Mildred DeBell will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by her children, John and Stuart, Jr., 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 Mildred DeBell, a venerable icon of the Centreville community; 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 Mildred DeBell as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

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