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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 72

Offered January 8, 2020

Prefiled January 7, 2020

Designating May 1, in 2020 and in each succeeding year, as Oliver White Hill, Sr., Day in Virginia.

Patrons—Bagby, Lopez, Herring, McQuinn, Torian, Tyler and Ward

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Oliver White Hill, Sr., the civil rights icon and attorney who devoted his legal career to securing full constitutional rights and first-class citizenship for all Americans, was born in Richmond and raised in Roanoke; and

WHEREAS, inspired to attend law school and overturn Jim Crow laws after reading an annotated Constitution of the United States given to him by his aunt, Oliver Hill graduated from the Howard University School of Law in 1933 alongside his friend, Thurgood Marshall; and

WHEREAS, Oliver Hill was admitted to the Virginia State Bar and, after briefly practicing in Roanoke, established a practice in Richmond in 1939, pursuing a broad equalization campaign for African American teachers and students; he would continue practicing law until he retired as senior partner of the law firm of Hill, Tucker & Marsh at the age of 91; and

WHEREAS, in 1943, Oliver Hill enlisted in the United States Army and served the country with honor and distinction through the end of World War II; later, he also served the country in the civil service, both as a presidential appointee to the committee that led to the establishment of the United States Commission on Civil Rights and as an integral member of the Federal Housing Administration; and

WHEREAS, fighting racial inequality and social injustice his entire career, Oliver Hill is best known for his legal prowess in many of the nation's landmark civil rights cases; his case, *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, was one of the five cases combined into *Brown v. Board of Education*, the historic U.S. Supreme Court decision that abolished segregation in public schools; and

WHEREAS, Oliver Hill was admitted to the bar of each of the federal district and appellate courts and the United States Supreme Court; in 1971, he became a permanent member of the United States Court of Appeals Fourth Circuit Judicial Conference and later was a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, the Virginia Law Foundation, and the Old Dominion Law Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Oliver Hill gave liberally of his time and talents to numerous organizations, including the NAACP, the National Bar Association, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, the National Association of Intergroup Relations Officials, the Richmond Urban League, the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, the Commission on Constitutional Revision for the State of Virginia, and the Sigma Pi Phi and Omega Psi Phi fraternities; and

WHEREAS, Oliver Hill encouraged minority groups to participate in organized political activities through his untiring work with the Richmond City Democratic Committee and, in 1949, became the first African American since the Reconstruction-era to be elected to the Richmond City Council; and

WHEREAS, Oliver Hill received numerous accolades, honorary degrees, and awards in recognition of his illustrious legal career and service to the community, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1999, the American Bar Association Medal in 2000, the NAACP's Springarn Medal in 2005, and the Old Dominion Bar Association's Lifetime Achievement Award; and

WHEREAS, today, in honor of his commitments to justice and helping others, both the Richmond City Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courthouse and the Roanoke City Courthouse bear Oliver Hill's name, while the Virginia State Bar since 2002 has bestowed the Oliver White Hill Student Pro Bono Award upon law students recognized for extraordinary public service; and

WHEREAS, Oliver Hill valiantly devoted himself to building a more just and inclusive America; successfully litigated landmark cases that secured equal rights for African Americans in education, employment, housing, voting, and jury selection; and tirelessly fought to improve the lives of all citizens of the Commonwealth and the nation with his unwavering dedication to freedom; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate May 1, in 2020 and in each succeeding year, as Oliver White Hill, Sr., Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Oliver White Hill Foundation so that members of the organization may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.