

2020 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 503

Celebrating the life of Rosetta Ann Walton Harris.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, August 28, 2020

WHEREAS, Rosetta Ann Walton Harris, the longtime vice mayor of the Town of Bridgewater, who made history as one of the first women to serve on the Bridgewater Town Council, died on June 25, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Rosetta Harris graduated from duPont Manual High School in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1953 and later studied at the University of Louisville and Bob Jones University; in 1971, she relocated to the Bridgewater area and worked at both the former Dominion Bank and with James Madison University's athletics department; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, Rosetta Harris won a seat on the Bridgewater Town Council, joining Nancy Trout as the first women to be elected to the town's governing body; she would ultimately serve on the Bridgewater Town Council for 28 years, including 20 years as the town's vice mayor, before retiring in 2016; and

WHEREAS, one of Rosetta Harris' first major accomplishments on the town council was the establishment of the Bridgewater Community Center, which was completed in 1996 and has since served as an important gathering place for the citizens of Bridgewater; she made her mark in the town's civic affairs by initiating the design and adoption of the Bridgewater flag; and

WHEREAS, as the head of Bridgewater's community relations committee for many years, Rosetta Harris was responsible for establishing several civic ceremonies and rituals that the town continues to enjoy today, including its "Summer's End" Labor Day celebration, its annual Christmas tree lighting, and the popular Oakdale Park Summer concert series, which has since been named the Harris Summer Concert Series in her honor; and

WHEREAS, Rosetta Walton Harris served the Commonwealth admirably on both the state and local level through her work with the Virginia Association for Family and Community Education, serving on the association's board for 12 years and as its president from 1989 to 1991; her steadfast commitment to the organization is memorialized today through the Rockingham County chapter's Rosetta Walton Harris Scholarship; and

WHEREAS, to honor her years of service on behalf of the citizens of Bridgewater; a local park was named the "Dinkel-Harris Gateway to Bridgewater" upon her retirement in 2016; additionally, the Bridgewater Ruritan Club named Rosetta Harris its Citizen of the Year in 2001, commemorating her outsized impact on the community; and

WHEREAS, guided throughout her life by her deep and abiding faith, Rosetta Harris enjoyed worship and fellowship with her community for many years at Bridgewater Church of the Brethren, where she served as Christian education director, deacon, and a member of both the personnel and communications committees; and

WHEREAS, Rosetta Harris will be dearly remembered and fondly missed by her children, Kevin and Dana, and their families; her sisters, Nina, Cynthia, and Yvonne; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Rosetta Ann Walton Harris, a beloved civic leader of Bridgewater who inspired countless individuals through her kind and generous spirit; 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 Rosetta Ann Walton Harris as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for her memory.

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