

2021 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 716

Celebrating the life of Thomas Henry Francis.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 4, 2021
Agreed to by the Senate, February 11, 2021

WHEREAS, Thomas Henry Francis, an inspirational community leader in Chesterfield, died on January 11, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis was born in New York City and raised by his grandparents in Midlothian; he attended Carver High School, where he was a saxophone player in the school band and a member of the baseball team; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis served his country as a specialized mechanic in the United States Air Force from 1964 to 1968; he was trained to service multiple aircraft, including nuclear-equipped fighters and special forces fighters, bombers, and interceptors under the former Tactical Air Command; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis was an active member of the civil rights movement in the 1960s and worked toward the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment; he took pride in fulfilling his civic duty to vote throughout his life and encouraged others to do the same; and

WHEREAS, a first generation college graduate, Thomas Francis earned a bachelor's degree from Virginia Union University, then began his career with Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company in Petersburg; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis later became a manager and supervisor of Coors Brewery and served as the company's African American community public relations liaison; in 1999, he began managing a fleet of drivers for Swift Transportation until his well-earned retirement; and

WHEREAS, possessed of an entrepreneurial spirit, Thomas Francis opened two small businesses, a catering company and a promotional printing company; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis volunteered his leadership as chair of the Chesterfield County Democratic Committee and treasurer of the Democratic Black Caucus of Virginia; more recently, he worked as a strategist and campaign chair for a mayoral candidate in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis enjoyed fellowship and worship with the community as a member of Hood Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, where he sang with the church's renowned men's chorus and served on the finance committee and the usher board; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by one child, Francis, Thomas Francis will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his devoted wife of 53 years, Edna; his sons, Todd and Tyrone, 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 Thomas Henry Francis, a highly admired member of the Chesterfield County 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 Thomas Henry Francis as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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