

2021 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 588

Celebrating the life of Richard Pitts, Sr.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 27, 2021

WHEREAS, Richard Pitts, Sr., an accomplished athlete, esteemed coach and educator, and beloved member of the Hampton Roads community, died on January 9, 2021; and

WHEREAS, affectionately known by friends and family as "Pop," Richard Pitts was a standout athlete at Booker T. Washington High School in Norfolk, leading the boys' basketball team to consecutive Virginia Interscholastic Association state finals; and

WHEREAS, Richard Pitts achieved great success at what is now Norfolk State University, where he notched 1,883 points and 1,235 rebounds over his career, good for seventh and second on the school's all-time leaderboard; and

WHEREAS, along with various league honors, Richard Pitts helped carry the Norfolk State University basketball team to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics national tournament semifinals in 1966; and

WHEREAS, after a tenure at Peninsula Catholic High School in Newport News from 1970 to 1975, Richard Pitts served variously as an athletic director, teacher, and coach of the boys' basketball team at Menchville High School in Newport News for nearly 30 years; and

WHEREAS, Richard Pitts was notably the first African American athletic director at a Newport News high school since the school system had been integrated in 1971 and was highly regarded by all for his steadfast commitment to his student-athletes and coaches; and

WHEREAS, Richard Pitts lived by his belief in the importance of integrity and hard work, and his legacy endures through the accomplishments of the myriad student-athletes and coaches he mentored over his career; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his achievements as an athlete, coach, and athletic director, Richard Pitts was inducted into the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association Hall of Fame, the Norfolk State University Hall of Fame, and the Hampton Roads African American Sports Hall of Fame; in 2014, the Richard "Pop" Pitts Track Classic at Todd Stadium in Newport News was held in his honor; and

WHEREAS, guided throughout his life by his faith, Richard Pitts enjoyed worship and fellowship with his community at Ivy Baptist Church in Newport News, where he was a devoted member for more than 40 years and former chairman of the trustee board; and

WHEREAS, Richard Pitts will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his loving wife of more than 50 years, Viola; his children, Rosalyn and Richard, Jr., and their families; 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 Richard Pitts, Sr., a legend of the Hampton Roads athletic community whose unwavering kindness, generosity, and dedication left an impression on countless lives; 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 Richard Pitts, Sr., as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

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