

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 214

Celebrating the life of Estelle Hunter McCadden.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 14, 2022
Agreed to by the Senate, February 17, 2022

WHEREAS, Estelle Hunter McCadden, an esteemed educator and an accomplished advocate and community leader of the Melrose-Rugby neighborhood in Roanoke, died on January 31, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Estelle McCadden was born in Rocky Mount and moved to Roanoke when she was 10 years of age, graduating from Lucy Addison High School before attending Bennett College and ultimately earning her degree from Morgan State College in 1947; and

WHEREAS, Estelle McCadden began her career as a home economics educator with Roanoke City Public Schools in 1956, teaching first at elementary and middle schools before working at William Fleming High School until her retirement in 1988; and

WHEREAS, Estelle McCadden dedicated herself in her retirement to advocating on behalf of the residents of northwest Roanoke and specifically those of the Melrose-Rugby neighborhood, which had been home to a predominately African American community since the 1960s; and

WHEREAS, Estelle McCadden was a regular presence at Roanoke City Council meetings, where she was admired for her willingness to address problems straight on and for her ability to bring council members to her side; and

WHEREAS, in response to the rising rates of crime and student dropouts in her community in the 1980s, Estelle McCadden co-founded the Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum in 1989, uniting her fellow neighbors to confront these societal ills; the organization would be incorporated six years later and Estelle McCadden would serve as its president until 2021; and

WHEREAS, Estelle McCadden pursued ways to improve housing, food availability, and medical services through her work with the Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum and ultimately expanded her mission by founding the Virginia Statewide Neighborhood Conference in 2001 and serving as its president until 2021; and

WHEREAS, Estelle McCadden's involvement in the community extended to her service on the board of directors of Neighborhoods USA for more than 15 years and as former director of the Ms. Virginia Senior America Pageant; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of her tremendous accomplishments, Estelle McCadden was named the Roanoke Valley Mother of the Year for Civic Affairs in 1994 and the Roanoke Citizen of the Year in 2008; and

WHEREAS, Estelle McCadden was honored with the Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council's Women of Achievement Award in 2019, the Friendship Foundation's Vision and Values Award for Teamwork in 2021, and the Roanoke Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Martin Luther King, Jr., Drum Major for Justice Award; and

WHEREAS, guided throughout her life by her faith, Estelle McCadden joined Jerusalem Baptist Church in Roanoke in 1936 when her father became the church's pastor and enjoyed worshipping with her community there ever since; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by her loving husband, Eugene, Estelle McCadden will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by her children, Mac, Beryl, Kelvin, and Wanda, and their families, and by 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 Estelle Hunter McCadden, a queen of neighborhoods of the Commonwealth whose passion and dedication left an outsized impact on the 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 Estelle Hunter McCadden as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

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