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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 223

Offered February 15, 2022

Celebrating the life of the Reverend LaVerne McCain Gill.

Patrons—Plum, Hope, Jenkins, Keam, Maldonado, Rasoul, Reid, Shin, Simonds, Ware and Watts;
 Senators: Boysko, Deeds, Edwards, Hashmi, Howell, Ruff and Spruill

WHEREAS, the Reverend LaVerne McCain Gill, an esteemed spiritual leader and a beloved member of the Reston community, died on October 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS, LaVerne Gill attended Anna Burdick Vocational High School in Washington, D.C., before earning a bachelor's degree in business administration from Howard University, which she accomplished in four years while working two jobs; and

WHEREAS, LaVerne Gill's subsequent educational pursuits included master's degrees from both Rutgers University and American University in business administration and political speech and rhetoric, respectively; and

WHEREAS, LaVerne Gill cultivated an untold number of young minds as a lecturer at Howard University, the University of California, Berkeley, and the Ecumenical Theological Seminary and as an associate professor at the University of the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, in other career ventures, LaVerne Gill published a weekly newspaper, produced radio and television programs, served as a legislative aide for a United States Senator, and worked as a budget analyst for the Federal Reserve Board of Governors; and

WHEREAS, dedicated to honing her abilities as a spiritual guide and leader, LaVerne Gill later attended Princeton Theological Seminary, where she earned a master's degree in divinity in 1997 and a master's degree in theology the following year; and

WHEREAS, during her years at Princeton Theological Seminary, LaVerne Gill interned at the United Christian Parish and developed its "Works Sunday" program, a community service event that grew to include more than 20 Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist congregations and that ran for 25 years until it was paused by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, following her graduation from Princeton Theological Seminary, LaVerne Gill became both the first woman and first African American to serve as minister of the Webster United Church of Christ (UCC) in Webster Township, Michigan, where she served for nine years; and

WHEREAS, LaVerne Gill's community outreach extended globally, as she started and led an annual church mission trip to Ghana to assist in one of the country's refugee camps, headed up a fundraiser that raised \$100,000 to build 11 water wells in Ghana, taught high school teachers in Ethiopia, and traveled to Cuba as part of an international delegation in support of Cuban women; and

WHEREAS, following her retirement from full-time ministerial duties, LaVerne Gill served as a UCC chaplain at the Chautauqua Institution in New York for five years and published seven books, including *African American Women in Congress: Forming and Transforming History*, *Daughters of Dignity: African Biblical Women and the Virtues of Womanhood*, *Vashti's Victory and Other Biblical Women Resisting Injustice*, and *My Mother Prayed for Me: Faith Journaling for African American Women*; 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 the Reverend LaVerne McCain Gill, a cherished faith leader whose unwavering commitments to justice, liberation, and education made a profound and lasting impact 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 the Reverend LaVerne McCain Gill as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

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