

2023 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 697

Offered February 15, 2023

Commending Sushmita Mazumdar.

Patrons—Hope, Bennett-Parker, Lopez and Sullivan; Senators: Ebbin, Favola and Howell

WHEREAS, Sushmita Mazumdar, a multidisciplinary artist, writer, and educator in Arlington, has touched countless lives in Northern Virginia through her creativity and commitment to celebrating the rich diversity of the community; and

WHEREAS, Sushmita Mazumdar grew up in Mumbai, India, where she earned a bachelor's degree in applied art, and worked as an art director in the advertising industry for 10 years before moving to the United States in 1999; she began serving as a docent at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art and helped visitors to the museum better engage with the collection through her personal experiences and expertise; and

WHEREAS, Sushmita Mazumdar began writing and illustrating stories to introduce her four-year-old son to Indian culture and share stories from her childhood; she subsequently founded Handmade Storybooks in 2007 after she received interest in the project from friends, neighbors, and a local nonprofit organization; and

WHEREAS, through Handmade Storybooks, Sushmita Mazumdar has worked with the Smithsonian Institution, Living Legends of Alexandria, Arlington Arts, and local public libraries to help children, families, and seniors create similar works about their own cultures and lived experiences to better preserve their heritage; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, Sushmita Mazumdar also established Studio PAUSE, an art and bookmaking studio located in the Gates of Ballston affordable housing community, where members of the public can learn from and collaborate with local artists; the studio supports personal and cultural wellness by encouraging clients to take the time to discover or enhance their sense of creativity in a positive and supportive atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, Sushmita Mazumdar collaborated with AHC Inc., an affordable housing nonprofit organization, to address socio-emotional needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and create *We PAUSED!*, a community book project chronicling the effects of the pandemic on the Gates of Ballston; this book project was later transformed into an art exhibit; and

WHEREAS, among other projects, Sushmita Mazumdar was hired by Arlington Arts to create new artwork for its bus system and led an art workshop for local bus drivers; she was also commissioned by the Virginia Folklife Program to develop an interactive survey activity for the 2022 Richmond Folk Festival; and

WHEREAS, Sushmita Mazumdar is highly admired in the arts community and serves on the board of Arlington Arts and serves as a commissioner for the Virginia Commission for the Arts; and

WHEREAS, a passionate lifelong learner, Sushmita Mazumdar continues to discover more about her Bengali heritage, particularly the study of Bangla script, and is well-poised to continue serving the arts community and the residents of Arlington in the future; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Sushmita Mazumdar for her contributions to the arts and cultural life in Arlington; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Sushmita Mazumdar as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for her personal and professional achievements.

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