

2023 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 295

Celebrating the life of William L. Prentiss, Jr.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 9, 2023

WHEREAS, William L. Prentiss, Jr., of Richmond, a distinguished educator and band director who helped countless young people hone their musical talents and a beloved husband, father, and friend, died on January 27, 2023; and

WHEREAS, a native of Richmond, William Prentiss, known by many as "BB," began to cultivate his passion for music at a young age and began playing the flute in fifth grade; he was a talented multi-instrumentalist, also playing tuba, piano, and saxophone, and in middle school he joined a friend's band called The Brass Connection; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from what is now Huguenot High School, where he was a member of the junior varsity football team and a drum major in the marching band, William Prentiss earned a bachelor's degree in music media and an endorsement and master's degree in music education from Norfolk State University; and

WHEREAS, while at Norfolk State University, William Prentiss played in the Spartan Legion marching band, the pep band, the saxophone quartet, and the symphonic wind ensemble; he also joined the Pi Gamma Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., where he served as dean of pledges and chapter president (basileus), and forged many lifelong friendships with his brothers; and

WHEREAS, William Prentiss continued his studies at Shenandoah University and subsequently earned an endorsement in administration and supervision from Longwood University; and

WHEREAS, over the course of 27 years, William Prentiss mentored and inspired young people as a band director at schools in Prince William County, Isle of Wight County, Portsmouth, Washington, D.C., Richmond, Norfolk, and his last assignment in Chesterfield County; and

WHEREAS, William Prentiss was recognized as an elite adjudicator, conductor, and clinician throughout the Commonwealth; his marching, concert, and jazz bands received more than 23 superior assessment ratings at district and state levels, and one of his bands was the only marching band from a public school in Richmond to be named as a Virginia Honor Band; and

WHEREAS, William Prentiss served as an assistant band director and adjunct professor at Virginia Union University; he also helped many of his high school students audition for and receive scholarships to various institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, William Prentiss was a valued member of several peer organizations and honor societies related to the musical arts, and he cofounded two professional bands, Opium Jazz in Tidewater and Quintessential Jazz in Richmond; and

WHEREAS, outside of his career, William Prentiss remained active with Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., serving as basileus of the Gamma Xi Chapter in Virginia Beach and the Phi Phi Chapter in Richmond; he was the chair of the fraternity's International Talent Hunt for 15 years, and president of the fraternity's P&G Foundation; and

WHEREAS, William Prentiss received many awards and accolades from Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., including Basileus of the Year, Founders' Lifetime Achievement Award, and several Omega Man of the Year awards; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, William Prentiss brought joy to others through his generosity, humility, and quick wit; his greatest joy in life was his beloved family, and he relished every opportunity to spend time with them and pass down his lifetime of wisdom to his daughters; and

WHEREAS, William Prentiss will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife of 31 years, Diana; his daughters, Maya, Dara, and Jana; his mother, Rosa; 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 William L. Prentiss, Jr., an influential leader in music education who touched the lives of countless young people throughout the Commonwealth; 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 William L. Prentiss, Jr., as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

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