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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 396

Offered February 21, 2023

Commemorating the life and legacy of Ella Louise Stokes Hunter, Ed.D.

Patron—Hudson

WHEREAS, Ella Louise Stokes Hunter, Ed.D., a trailblazing mathematics educator and longtime professor at Virginia State University, made history as the first Black woman to earn a degree from the University of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Louise Hunter was born and raised in Petersburg, where she excelled academically from an early age, drawing the attention of her teachers and peers; and

WHEREAS, Louise Hunter graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Howard University before earning a master's degree in education from Harvard University in 1925, becoming perhaps the first Black woman to graduate from that institution; and

WHEREAS, at the University of Virginia (UVA), Louise Hunter developed research focused on helping high school students transition to college-level mathematics, successfully defending her doctoral dissertation, "Pre-freshman Mathematics in State Colleges and Universities," in 1953 and graduating that same year; and

WHEREAS, Louise Hunter began teaching mathematics at what is today Virginia State University in 1920, remaining with the institution until her retirement in 1968; and

WHEREAS, Louise Hunter and her husband, John McNeile Hunter, who was also on the faculty at Virginia State University, were compassionate and caring mentors to many students at the school, guiding them not only in their academic pursuits but also through the challenges they would face during the Jim Crow era; and

WHEREAS, Louise Hunter was a charter member of the Delta Omega graduate chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., in Petersburg and remained actively involved with the organization throughout her life; and

WHEREAS, Louise Hunter's legacy has been preserved in part through the Hunter Student Research Conference, an annual student research conference at UVA's School of Education and Human Development that was renamed in her honor in 2020; and

WHEREAS, the steely persistence and unwavering commitment to serving others that Louise Hunter demonstrated in her life will continue to inspire Virginians for generations to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the life and legacy of Ella Louise Stokes Hunter, Ed.D., the first Black woman to graduate from the University of Virginia and an influential member of the Virginia State University community, hereby be commemorated on the 70th anniversary of her historic achievement; 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 Ella Louise Stokes Hunter as an expression of the House of Delegates' high regard for her place in history and her many contributions to the Commonwealth.