

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA -- 1997 SESSION

ENROLLED

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 426

*On the death of Dr. Walter Nathaniel Ridley.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 10, 1997

Agreed to by the Senate, January 16, 1997

WHEREAS, Dr. Walter Nathaniel Ridley, a trailblazing scholar who built a distinguished academic career at four colleges in three states, died on September 26, 1996; and

WHEREAS, a native of Newport News, Walter Ridley was educated in the Newport News public schools and earned his bachelor's and master's degrees, cum laude, from Howard University; and

WHEREAS, wishing to continue his graduate work at the University of Virginia, Walter Ridley was denied admission until 1950, when the University decided to seek and admit black students; and

WHEREAS, Walter Ridley shortly thereafter became the first African American to earn a degree from a traditionally white Southern university when he received his Doctor of Education degree from the University of Virginia in 1953; and

WHEREAS, long an influential force in the American Teachers Association, the national association of black educators in colleges and universities, Dr. Ridley was instrumental in the merger with the National Education Association, serving on the merger commission and receiving the Meritorious Service Award for his 25 years of service with the American Teachers Association; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ridley served as an administrator and professor at Virginia State University for 21 years, then became academic dean at Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville; and

WHEREAS, in 1958, Dr. Ridley was appointed the fifth president of Elizabeth City State College in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, an institution that expanded greatly under his leadership and became a university in 1969; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ridley returned to the classroom as a professor at West Chester State College in Pennsylvania, where he remained until he retired as professor emeritus; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ridley was a prominent member of numerous boards and commissions, including the United States Commission on UNESCO, the Council of Presidents of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association, and the Save the Children Federation; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ridley's long career was characterized by perseverance, outstanding achievement, dedication to higher education, and commitment to the many thousands of young people whose lives he touched and improved; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly mourn the passing of an exceptional leader, scholar, and gentleman, Dr. Walter Nathaniel Ridley; 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 Dr. Walter Nathaniel Ridley as an expression of the General Assembly's great respect for his memory.

ENROLLED

HJ426ER