

2014 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5251

Commending Virginia Union University.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, September 18, 2014

Agreed to by the Senate, November 10, 2014

WHEREAS, Virginia Union University will commence a year-long celebration of its 150th anniversary in 2014; and

WHEREAS, soon after Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy, was liberated 150 years ago on April 3, 1865, the American Baptist Home Mission Society sent teachers and missionaries to the city to educate and train newly emancipated slaves; and

WHEREAS, by November 1865, the Mission Society was officially holding classes for the Richmond Theological School for Freedmen to prepare African Americans for the Baptist ministry; the Mission Society proposed a "National Theological Institute," which evolved into Wayland Seminary, one of four institutions that were combined to form Virginia Union University; and

WHEREAS, according to the history of the university researched by Professor Raymond Hylton, Wayland Seminary educated such notable students as Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., the famous pastor of New York's Abyssinian Baptist Church; Dr. Booker T. Washington, founder of Tuskegee University; Reverend Harvey Johnson, pastor and early civil rights activist; Kate Drumgoold, author of *A Slave Girl's Story*; Henry Vinton Plummer, Civil War naval hero and United States Chaplain to the "Buffalo Soldiers"; and Albert L. Cralle, inventor of the ice cream scoop; and

WHEREAS, members of the Mission Society persevered in the face of many difficulties and obstacles to educate formerly enslaved African Americans in Richmond and established a school in which many of the first classes were taught in Lumpkin's Jail or the "Devil's Half Acre," a former slave holding pen and punishment breaking center at 15th and Franklin Streets; and

WHEREAS, the support of African American ministers and community leaders was crucial to the school's success, and Virginia Union University, a "union" of four schools—Wayland Seminary; Richmond Theological Seminary; Hartshorn Memorial College, the country's first college for African American women; and Storer College, the first institution of higher education for African Americans in West Virginia—has expanded its mission to develop and nurture scholars, leaders, and lifelong learners in a global community; and

WHEREAS, alumni of Virginia Union University have made significant contributions in the areas of the arts, science, business, theology, medicine, education, law, research, communications, athletics, the military, social activism, philanthropy, technology, and politics, and many have been the first African Americans recognized in their fields; and

WHEREAS, among the university's many notable alumni are Eugene Knickle Jones, first secretary of the National Urban League and a member of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's unofficial "Black Cabinet" of advisors; Dr. Benjamin Mays, president of Morehouse College; Dr. Jean Louise Harris, the first African American to graduate from the Medical College of Virginia, now Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, and Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources from 1978 to 1982; Dr. Spottswood W. Robinson, III, Virginia civil rights lawyer who argued one of the five cases that became *Brown v. Board of Education*, dean of the Howard University Law School, and Chief Judge of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia; John Merchant, the first African American graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law; Dr. Howard S. Jones, Jr., specialist in the fields of microwave research and electromagnetics and one of the most prolific inventors in United States history, holding rights to 31 patents; Admiral Samuel Gravely, first African American to attain the ranks of rear admiral and vice admiral in the United States Navy; Dr. Yvonne Maddox, named Deputy Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in 1955 and Acting Deputy Director of the National Institute of Health in 1960; National Basketball Association stars Ben Wallace, Charles Oakley, and Terry Davis; Bishop Leontine T. C. Kelly, first woman of any denomination to be consecrated as bishop; former State Senator Henry L. Marsh, III, civil rights attorney and first African American elected as Mayor of the City of Richmond; former State Senator Benjamin J. Lambert, III; former Governor L. Douglas Wilder, first African American elected to the Senate of Virginia and to the office of Lieutenant Governor of Virginia and the nation's first elected African American governor; and former Delegate Dwight Clinton Jones, current Mayor of the City of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Union University has been one of the oldest creators of new jobs and has helped to advance economic development in the City of Richmond, the Commonwealth, and the nation; and

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WHEREAS, Virginia Union University is one of the oldest historically Black colleges and universities in the South and has served as a bridge to intellectual freedom and equality for students of all races, nationalities, and genders; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Virginia Union University on the occasion of its 150th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Reverend Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson and Dr. Claude G. Perkins, chairman of the Virginia Union University Board of Trustees and president of the university, respectively, as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation and gratitude for the University's outstanding service to the Commonwealth and best wishes for continued success.