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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 109

Offered February 19, 2015

Commending Rachel Davis Fowlkes, Ed.D.

Patrons—Carrico and Chafin

WHEREAS, Dr. Rachel Davis Fowlkes, who since 1992 has served with great diligence and responsibility as the agency head and executive director of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, retires on June 30, 2015; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Rachel Fowlkes worked with state legislators to establish the first multi-institutional higher education facility where off-campus students could earn undergraduate and graduate degrees; the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center (SWVHEC) became a state agency in 1992; and

WHEREAS, the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center provides undergraduate and graduate degree programs and professional development courses as well as 95,000 square feet of educational and high-tech conference facilities; and

WHEREAS, currently, colleges and universities from around the Commonwealth offer 90 degree programs for students at SWVHEC, including the University of Virginia, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Old Dominion University, Radford University, and Emory and Henry College; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Rachel Fowlkes has been executive director of SWVHEC since its founding; she reports to the center's Board of Trustees, which is comprised of state legislators and higher education officials, representatives from nine institutions of higher education, and six members who are appointed by the Governor; and

WHEREAS, before working for the SWVHEC, Dr. Rachel Fowlkes was state coordinator of education programs for the University of Virginia's Division of Continuing Education, and she previously directed the Division's Southwest Regional Center; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Rachel Fowlkes received a bachelor's degree from Millsaps College, a master's degree from Mississippi State University, and a doctoral degree from the University of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, under Dr. Rachel Fowlkes' guidance, the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center has been used as a model for five subsequent centers in the Commonwealth, and for many others out of state, including centers in Kingsport, Tennessee, and High Point, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Rachel Fowlkes has made many other contributions to the Southwest Virginia region; she is a charter member of the Southwest Virginia Public Education Consortium and has chaired the University of Virginia Jefferson Scholars Regional Selection Committee since 1988, and she is a member of the board of Johnston Memorial Hospital; and

WHEREAS, additionally, Dr. Rachel Fowlkes is a member of the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission, the Virginia Creeper Trail Advisory Committee, and serves on the Economic Development Authority for the town of Abingdon; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Dr. Rachel Davis Fowlkes hereby be commended on the occasion of her retirement on June 30, 2015, for her many years of dedication and service as the agency head and executive director of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Dr. Rachel Davis Fowlkes as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect and admiration for her commitment to providing excellent higher education opportunities to the people of Southwest Virginia and best wishes in retirement.

INTRODUCED

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