

2017 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 731

Celebrating the life of Anthony Randolph Cooke.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 20, 2017
Agreed to by the Senate, January 26, 2017

WHEREAS, Anthony Randolph Cooke, a dedicated public safety officer who broke down barriers as the first black firefighter in Virginia Beach, died on December 27, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Anthony "Tony" Randolph Cooke honorably served his country as a member of the United States Army during the Vietnam War; desirous to be of further service to the community, he joined the Seatack Fire Department, an independent all-black volunteer fire station; and

WHEREAS, when Tony Cooke transferred to the Virginia Beach Fire Department in 1976, he became the city's first full-time African American firefighter; he bravely and professionally confronted discrimination, never wavering in his desire to safeguard the lives and property of his fellow residents; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, Tony Cooke received the Virginia Beach Fire Department's Medal of Honor after he rescued four children from a house fire, carrying two of them under his arms, while leading the other two to safety as they held on to his jacket; and

WHEREAS, after his well-earned retirement in 2001, Tony Cooke met and married his wife, Rosita, and settled in Virginia Beach, where he touched countless lives over the course of his 25-year career; and

WHEREAS, Tony Cooke's courage and leadership inspired other young African American men in the area to serve and safeguard the members of the community as firefighters; he leaves behind a legacy of excellence for the entire Virginia Beach Fire Department; and

WHEREAS, Tony Cooke will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Rosita, and numerous other family members, friends, and fellow firefighters; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Anthony Randolph Cooke; 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 Anthony Randolph Cooke as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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