SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 48

Commending Dr. Katherine G. Johnson.

Agreed to by the Senate, March 6, 2018

WHEREAS, Dr. Katherine G. Johnson of Hampton, a distinguished mathematician with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration who was an integral member of the nation's space program for more than 30 years, from Project Mercury to the modern shuttle program, celebrates her 100th birthday in 2018; and

WHEREAS, born in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, in 1918, Dr. Katherine Johnson was a first-generation college student whose parents rented a house near West Virginia State University so she could complete her degree; exceptionally skilled in mathematics, she graduated from college summa cum laude at the age of 18; and

WHEREAS, after relocating to Newport News in 1952, Dr. Katherine Johnson found employment at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Langley Research Center at a time when African American women were typically assigned to all-black computer pools; and

WHEREAS, within weeks of her arrival, Dr. Katherine Johnson was asked to assist in the Spacecraft Dynamics Branch of the Flight Dynamics and Control Division, and her expertise would become crucial to every major American space program in the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Katherine Johnson calculated the trajectory for the first manned spaceflight by an American in 1961, verified the first flight calculation made by a computer for the first orbit of the earth by an American, and worked on *Apollo 11's* trajectory to the moon in 1969; she later worked on additional shuttle and satellite programs; and

WHEREAS, an inspirational leader, Dr. Katherine Johnson has encouraged young men and women throughout the United States to pursue careers in science, technology, and mathematics; she has earned numerous other awards and accolades for her service to the Commonwealth, the nation, and the field of space exploration; and

WHEREAS, throughout the course of her career, Dr. Katherine Johnson has received the NASA Lunar Orbiter Achievement Award, the NASA Apollo Team Group Achievement Award, three NASA Special Achievement Awards, an honorary Doctorate of Laws from the State University of New York, and honorary Doctor of Science degrees from Capitol College and Old Dominion University, and she was honored by the National Technical Association as Mathematician of the Year in 1997; and

WHEREAS, on November 24, 2015, Dr. Katherine Johnson was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, which recognizes individuals who have made meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, by President Barack H. Obama at a special ceremony at the White House; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Katherine Johnson's trailblazing contributions to science and mathematics were immortalized in the award-winning motion picture *Hidden Figures*, released on December 25, 2016, and she received two additional honorary Doctor of Science degrees from West Virginia University and West Virginia State University in 2016; in addition, the Katherine G. Johnson Computational Research Facility at NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton was dedicated in her honor in 2017; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Katherine Johnson is also a Diamond Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, with more than 75 years of service to the organization; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Dr. Katherine G. Johnson hereby be commended for her contributions to the American space program on the occasion of her 100th birthday; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Dr. Katherine G. Johnson as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for her achievements in service to the nation.