

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 456

Celebrating the life of Mary J. Barnett.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 2019
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 22, 2019

WHEREAS, Mary J. Barnett, a Norfolk iconic small business owner, died on August 12, 2018; and
WHEREAS, Mary Barnett was born in Norfolk and raised on the rustic James family farm known as Grapevine Ridge; knowing the struggle of living in a historic farmhouse without running water or electricity during the Great Depression, and after losing both parents at a young age, along with her siblings, was first scattered to distant family members and ultimately to the Methodist orphanage in Richmond; she was always driven to study and work hard, determined to succeed; and

WHEREAS, Mary Barnett excelled at the former Oceana High School in Virginia Beach and then, upon moving in with cousins in Norfolk who treated her like their own daughter, transferred to Maury High School in Norfolk where she graduated at the top of her class; she continued her studies at Greensboro College in North Carolina, earning a degree in religion and English; and

WHEREAS, Mary Barnett worked for the former Seaboard Railway after college and during her first marriage became a teacher at Larchmont Elementary School; many years later, she would still see and be fondly remembered by many of her students from those days; and

WHEREAS, Mary Barnett was later a reading specialist for Norfolk Public Schools, earning her master's degree from Old Dominion University, and while teaching, first began investing in real estate and continued to own and manage several residential and commercial properties; and

WHEREAS, after her marriage to John Barnett, Mary Barnett helped transform Barnett Hardware, the family hardware store that opened in Wards Corner in 1945, into what is now Mary Barnett Gifts & Decorative Accessories, now in its 18th year on Granby Street in Norfolk's historic Riverview Village; and

WHEREAS, Mary Barnett was deeply involved in the First Presbyterian Church in Norfolk and was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Elizabeth River Women's Club, the Riverview Village Business District, and the Norfolk Yacht and Country Club; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by John, her husband of 26 years, Mary Barnett will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her children, Nancy and Randy, and stepsons, Jack and Richard, and their families; and numerous other family and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Mary J. Barnett, Norfolk iconic small business owner; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Mary J. Barnett as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her many contributions to the Tidewater region.