

2021 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 716

Offered February 2, 2021

Celebrating the life of Thomas Henry Francis.

Patrons—Bagby, Adams, D.M., Askew, Ayala, Bourne, Carr, Cole, J.G., Convirs-Fowler, Delaney, Hayes, Helmer, Heretick, Hope, Hudson, Kory, Levine, McQuinn, Rasoul, Reid, Simon and Simonds; Senators: Boysko, Deeds, Hashmi, Howell, McClellan, Saslaw and Spruill

WHEREAS, Thomas Henry Francis, an inspirational community leader in Chesterfield, died on January 11, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis was born in New York City and raised by his grandparents in Midlothian; he attended Carver High School, where he was a saxophone player in the school band and a member of the baseball team; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis served his country as a specialized mechanic in the United States Air Force from 1964 to 1968; he was trained to service multiple aircraft, including nuclear-equipped fighters and special forces fighters, bombers, and interceptors under the former Tactical Air Command; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis was an active member of the civil rights movement in the 1960s and worked toward the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment; he took pride in fulfilling his civic duty to vote throughout his life and encouraged others to do the same; and

WHEREAS, a first generation college graduate, Thomas Francis earned a bachelor's degree from Virginia Union University, then began his career with Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company in Petersburg; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis later became a manager and supervisor of Coors Brewery and served as the company's African American community public relations liaison; in 1999, he began managing a fleet of drivers for Swift Transportation until his well-earned retirement; and

WHEREAS, possessed of an entrepreneurial spirit, Thomas Francis opened two small businesses, a catering company and a promotional printing company; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis volunteered his leadership as chair of the Chesterfield County Democratic Committee and treasurer of the Democratic Black Caucus of Virginia; more recently, he worked as a strategist and campaign chair for a mayoral candidate in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Francis enjoyed fellowship and worship with the community as a member of Hood Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, where he sang with the church's renowned men's chorus and served on the finance committee and the usher board; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by one child, Francis, Thomas Francis will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his devoted wife of 53 years, Edna; his sons, Todd and Tyrone, and their families; and numerous other family members and friends; 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 Thomas Henry Francis, a highly admired member of the Chesterfield County community; 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 Thomas Henry Francis as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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