

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 315

Celebrating the life of Theodore Carter DeLaney, Jr.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 21, 2021

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 25, 2021

WHEREAS, Theodore Carter DeLaney, Jr., an esteemed professor of history at Washington and Lee University, who was the first African American department chair in the university's history and a pillar of its community, died on December 18, 2020; and

WHEREAS, born in Lexington, Theodore "Ted" DeLaney was a graduate of the historic Lylburn Downing School; in his early years, he explored various occupations and for several months was a postulant at a Catholic monastery of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement in New York; and

WHEREAS, upon returning to his hometown in the early 1960s, Ted DeLaney joined the staff of Washington and Lee University, serving initially as a custodian and later as a laboratory technician; and

WHEREAS, Ted DeLaney began enrolling in courses at Washington and Lee University in 1979 and was a full-time student within four years; by 1985, at the age of 42, he had graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in history; and

WHEREAS, after a brief foray as a teacher at the Asheville School in North Carolina, Ted DeLaney returned to his academic pursuits, earning a doctoral degree in history from The College of William and Mary in 1995; and

WHEREAS, that same year, more than three decades after he was first employed by Washington and Lee University, Ted DeLaney returned to his alma mater as a full-time faculty member in its department of history; he would later receive tenure and a promotion to associate professor in 2001 and achieve full professor status before his retirement in 2019; and

WHEREAS, known across campus for his courses on colonial North America, slavery in the Western Hemisphere, African American history, the civil rights movement, and gay and lesbian history, Ted DeLaney helped students and colleagues alike reach a greater understanding of how certain groups had been historically disadvantaged and dispossessed; and

WHEREAS, through his scholarship, Ted DeLaney explored obscure histories of African Americans in the Commonwealth, including a study of John Chavis and an oral history project that documented the role western Virginians played in the desegregation of schools in the years immediately following the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark ruling in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*; and

WHEREAS, Ted DeLaney's notable accomplishments at Washington and Lee University include co-founding the Africana Studies Program in 2005, which he directed from 2005 to 2007 and from 2013 to 2017, and chairing the history department from 2007 to 2013, which made him the first African American department head in the university's history; and

WHEREAS, Ted DeLaney sat on more than a dozen committees at Washington and Lee University, including the Working Group on the History of African Americans at W&L and the Commission on Institutional History and Community, and will be remembered for his efforts to promote inclusivity and diversity at the school; and

WHEREAS, committed to advancing the study of the history of the Commonwealth and the South, Ted DeLaney served as president of the St. George Tucker Society, was a member of the Southern Historical Association, and sat on the board of trustees of the Stonewall Jackson House and the board of directors of the Virginia Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Ted DeLaney was an active and engaged member of his community, serving as the first president of Yellow Brick Road Early Learning Center, president of the Waddell Elementary School Parent-Teacher Association, secretary of the Lexington City Board of Elections, and treasurer of the Rockbridge Regional Library Board; and

WHEREAS, Ted DeLaney's contributions to his community were recognized by many awards and accolades, including inductions into Omicron Delta Kappa and Phi Beta Kappa, an invitation to deliver the 2018 Fall Convocation address at Washington and Lee University, honorary degrees from Saint Paul's College and Washington and Lee University, and the Lexington/Rockbridge chapter of the NAACP's 2018 Community Service Award; and

WHEREAS, Ted DeLaney's legacy at Washington and Lee University has been enshrined through a postdoctoral fellowship, a lecture series in Africana Studies, and a scholarship in the humanities and interdisciplinary studies that have been established in his honor; and

WHEREAS, guided throughout his life by his deep and abiding faith, Ted DeLaney enjoyed worship and fellowship with his community at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Lexington for many years; he also served the Diocesan Church in Richmond in the 1970s and 1980s in various capacities, including

chairing its Social Ministry Commission and serving as both a charter member of the Office of Black Catholics and as a member of the diocesan pastoral council; and

WHEREAS, Ted DeLaney will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his loving wife, Patricia; his son, Damien, and his family; and numerous other family members 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 Theodore Carter DeLaney, Jr., a distinguished professor of history at Washington and Lee University whose wisdom and compassion left a profound and lasting impression on countless lives; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Theodore Carter DeLaney, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.