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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 577

Offered January 23, 2023

Celebrating the life of Barbara Jean Smith Taylor.

Patrons—Rasoul; Senator: Edwards

WHEREAS, Barbara Jean Smith Taylor, former first lady of the City of Roanoke and an active and beloved member of the Roanoke community, died on November 15, 2022; and

WHEREAS, affectionately known by friends and family as "B.J.," Barbara Taylor graduated from Clifton Forge High School, where she excelled at various activities, including cheerleading and music; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Taylor was a talented pianist and vocalist who taught herself to play piano at an early age and who took great joy in performing before others throughout her adult life; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Taylor married the Reverend Noel C. Taylor in 1955 and devoted herself to supporting his work as a pastor, both through her music ministry and otherwise, initially at First Baptist Church in Clifton Forge, then at First Baptist Church in Norfolk, and ultimately at High Street Baptist Church in Roanoke, where the Taylors settled in 1961; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Taylor and her husband Noel led High Street Baptist Church for 37 years, helping to develop it into one of the most prominent and influential churches in the Roanoke Valley; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Taylor became the first lady of the City of Roanoke in 1975 when Noel Taylor assumed the office of mayor, notably becoming the first African American mayor in the city's history and the city's longest-serving mayor, and she proudly carried out the duties and responsibilities of her role until he left office in 1992; and

WHEREAS, guided throughout her life by her faith, Barbara Taylor enjoyed worship and fellowship with her community at High Street Baptist Church, where, in addition to supporting her husband in his position as pastor, she was involved in the Sanctuary Choir and the annual seasonal holiday decorations and also served as the caretaker of the church's Upper Room; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by her loving husband, Noel, Barbara Taylor will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by her children, Sabrina and Deseree, and their families and by 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 Barbara Jean Smith Taylor, a cherished member of the Roanoke community whose poise, grace, and commitment to caring for others was a great unifying force in the city for many years; 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 Barbara Jean Smith Taylor as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

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