

2023 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 656

Celebrating the life of Carnis L. Poindexter.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 2023
Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 2023

WHEREAS, Carnis L. Poindexter, an honorable veteran, esteemed educator, beloved member of the Roanoke community, and legendary tennis coach who opened doors for many young Black student-athletes, died on September 21, 2022; and

WHEREAS, in the summer before his senior year at the former Lucy Addison High School in Roanoke, Carnis Poindexter taught himself the sport of tennis; without access to formal training or tennis clubs due to segregationist policies in place at the time, he relied solely on books and individual practice sessions at the local Springwood Park courts to develop as a player; and

WHEREAS, after playing in a regional junior developmental American Tennis Association (ATA) tournament in 1957, Carnis Poindexter drew the attention of local dentist and tennis player Dr. E.D. Downing, who helped Carnis Poindexter earn a tennis scholarship to what was formally Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical and Normal College, today known as the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB); and

WHEREAS, Carnis Poindexter went on to earn a bachelor's degree in health and physical education with a minor in general science from UAPB and later a master's degree in biology from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University; and

WHEREAS, while at UAPB, Carnis Poindexter won the ATA national intercollegiate singles championship in 1959, was a singles and doubles finalist in the Southwest Athletic Conference in 1960, and capped off his collegiate career by winning the ATA national intercollegiate tournament during his senior year in 1961; and

WHEREAS, upon graduating, Carnis Poindexter served the country with honor and distinction as a member of the United States Army before embarking on a career as an educator in 1964 at the former Jackson P. Burley High School in Charlottesville, where he founded the school's first tennis team; and

WHEREAS, Carnis Poindexter won the annual Roanoke City-County tennis tournament three consecutive times between 1964 and 1966 and would also win various other local competitions over the years at venues such as Washington Park, the Salem Civic Center, and Crystal Spring; and

WHEREAS, returning to his hometown of Roanoke in 1965, Carnis Poindexter devoted himself to teaching and coaching youth in Roanoke City Public Schools, including as a tennis coach at both Lucy Addison High School and Patrick Henry High School, steering the team of the former to a Virginia Interscholastic Association (VIA) state tennis championship in 1967; and

WHEREAS, through his tireless efforts and thoughtful guidance, Carnis Poindexter helped more than 25 student-athletes earn scholarships to play tennis at UAPB over his career, building a legacy that continues to reverberate through the community to this day; and

WHEREAS, as a testament to his accomplishments on the court and his impact on the communities he served, Carnis Poindexter was inducted into the UAPB Hall of Fame, the VIA Hall of Fame, and the Roanoke Regional Tennis Hall of Fame; in 2018, the tennis courts at the River's Edge Sports Complex in Roanoke were named the Carnis Poindexter Tennis Courts in his honor; and

WHEREAS, motivated throughout his life by his faith, Carnis Poindexter was a member of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, serving as an elder and mentor for more than 50 years and receiving Man of the Year awards from the congregation several times; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by his loving wife, Vera, and his son, Carnis, Carnis Poindexter will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his son, Clifton, and his family 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 Carnis L. Poindexter, a treasured member of the Roanoke community whose compassionate and selfless commitment to serving others enriched countless lives; 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 Carnis L. Poindexter as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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