

2023 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 665

Commending the South Hampton Roads Bar Association.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 2023
Agreed to by the Senate, February 23, 2023

WHEREAS, for 100 years, the South Hampton Roads Bar Association has served and supported the African American legal community in the region; and

WHEREAS, the South Hampton Roads Bar Association is mostly made up of African Americans who work as judges, attorneys, and legal students in the Hampton Roads area and is the oldest predominantly African American bar association in Virginia and the United States; and

WHEREAS, originally known as the Tidewater Bar Association, the South Hampton Roads Bar Association was established in October 1923 by a group of local African American attorneys. The original officers were Walter L. Davis as president, R.H. Pree as vice president, D.H. Edwards as recording secretary, V.C. Hodges as corresponding secretary, and A. Rainey as treasurer; and

WHEREAS, facing prejudice against African American attorneys and judges by other local bar associations, the Tidewater Bar Association reorganized multiple times, becoming the Twin City Bar Association and finally the South Hampton Roads Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, the South Hampton Roads Bar Association persevered and increased its influence in African American communities despite discriminatory stances by other regional and national bar associations and ultimately succeeded in achieving diversity on the bench in Hampton Roads; and

WHEREAS, after the South Hampton Roads Bar Association was founded, its members continued to fight against the legal segregation and discrimination established at the local and state levels; they also collaborated with regional groups like the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to address important issues such as residential segregation, inadequate funding for public schools, and unequal teacher salaries; and

WHEREAS, the South Hampton Roads Bar Association gives its members the tools and support they need to succeed professionally and personally, and it has embraced its duties to represent and empower underrepresented and underserved members of the community; and

WHEREAS, the South Hampton Roads Bar Association has earned its reputation as a dependable advocate for Hampton Roads legal professionals and strives to always be a voice for social justice and community involvement; and

WHEREAS, during its 100th year, the South Hampton Roads Bar Association will honor the legacies of those who founded and have made significant contributions to the organization, including President Emeritus William T. Mason, Jr., who was one of its longest living members and who was dedicated to the betterment of the legal community in the Commonwealth and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the South Hampton Roads Bar Association will commemorate its decades of achievements and honor the life and legacy of President Emeritus William T. Mason, Jr., at a gala event on April 15, 2023; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the South Hampton Roads Bar Association on the occasion of its 100th anniversary on April 15, 2023; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the South Hampton Roads Bar Association as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the organization's achievements in service to the residents of Hampton Roads, the Commonwealth, and the United States.

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