

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 277

Celebrating the life of Johnny Plummer Johnson.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 26, 2023
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 30, 2023

WHEREAS, Johnny Plummer Johnson, a devoted educator and a talented artist who touched countless lives in the Fredericksburg community through his mentorship and commitment to philanthropy, died on November 5, 2022; and

WHEREAS, a native of North Carolina, Johnny P. Johnson began to cultivate his passion for the arts at a young age; and

WHEREAS, Johnny P. Johnson graduated from Virginia State College, now Virginia State University (VSU), where he was the captain of the basketball team and was inducted into the VSU Sports Hall of Fame; he continued his education by earning a master's degree from Howard University, and he conducted other postgraduate studies at the Corcoran School of Art; and

WHEREAS, in 1959, Johnny P. Johnson relocated to the Fredericksburg area and began teaching sixth grade at Walker-Grant School, the city's first publicly funded school for Black students; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his work as a sixth-grade teacher, over the course of his career as an educator Johnny P. Johnson taught high school art, coached basketball, and served as an assistant principal for no additional compensation; and

WHEREAS, Johnny P. Johnson helped countless students achieve their fullest potential as an inspirational leader in and out of the classroom; during the 1960s, he played a critical role in the local civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, Johnny P. Johnson also taught art at James Monroe High School, became the first Black faculty member at Mary Washington College, now the University of Mary Washington, in 1968, and later served as an adjunct professor of art at Germanna Community College; he retired from Fredericksburg City Public Schools in the 1990s; and

WHEREAS, Johnny P. Johnson opened an art studio on Charles Street in Fredericksburg and became a founding member of Art First Gallery, which is now the oldest continually operating art cooperative in the city; and

WHEREAS, Johnny P. Johnson motivated his fellow residents to cultivate their personal sense of artistic creativity and channel their abilities into outlets for positive community growth; he worked with inmates in Stafford County to help young men in need gain self-confidence and a better understanding of self-worth through art programs; and

WHEREAS, Johnny P. Johnson also volunteered his leadership and wise insights to the Fredericksburg Branch NAACP and various city organizations related to human rights and community relations; he also donated hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of paintings to support community organizations; and

WHEREAS, Johnny P. Johnson expanded his outreach beyond the Commonwealth and created the Benin Art Support Project to enhance arts education in West Africa; and

WHEREAS, Johnny P. Johnson lived his faith through his actions and enjoyed fellowship and worship with the congregation of Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site), where he served as a Sunday school teacher, superintendent and deacon; and

WHEREAS, among many awards and accolades over the course of his career, Johnny P. Johnson was selected as the Virginia Teacher of the Year in 1977, the first time an art teacher received the honor; and

WHEREAS, Johnny P. Johnson will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by numerous family members, friends, and former students; 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 Johnny Plummer Johnson, an artist, educator, and local legend among the members of the Fredericksburg community; and, be it

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