

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 307

Celebrating the life of the Honorable Dale Hutter Harris.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 9, 2023
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 13, 2023

WHEREAS, the Honorable Dale Hutter Harris, a trailblazing judge of the Lynchburg Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 24th Judicial District of Virginia and a passionate advocate for children, died on October 21, 2022; and

WHEREAS, a native of Lynchburg, Dale Harris earned a bachelor's degree from Sweet Briar College, where she was a talented multisport athlete, a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and student government president; and

WHEREAS, Dale Harris continued her education by earning a master's degree from Lynchburg College, then subsequently attending the University of Virginia School of Law in her 40s; and

WHEREAS, after receiving her law degree, Dale Harris worked for a law firm in Lynchburg and served as a substitute judge in the 24th Judicial District of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, at a time when there were few women judges in the Commonwealth, Dale Harris was appointed as a judge of the Lynchburg Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court; and

WHEREAS, Dale Harris presided over the court with great fairness and wisdom for the next 21 years and earned the admiration of her colleagues for her compassion, dedication, and commitment to common sense; and

WHEREAS, Dale Harris helped establish the Lynchburg Court-Appointed Special Advocate program, wherein specially trained adults act as advocates for children in the legal system, and she served as a judge for a family court pilot program; and

WHEREAS, after retiring from the bench at age 71, Dale Harris continued serving as a substitute judge for another seven years; and

WHEREAS, Dale Harris was an active leader in the Virginia State Bar and served as chair of the Special Committee on Access to Legal Services and co-chair of the Child Custody Education Committee; she also served on the Commission on the Future of the Judicial System from 1987 to 1989; and

WHEREAS, at the national level, Dale Harris was a member of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, where she served as chair of the Child Custody and Visitation Committee and the Family Violence Committee and co-chair of the Advisory Committee that drafted model state domestic violence laws; and

WHEREAS, Dale Harris offered her leadership and expertise to many other civic and service organizations, and she earned several awards and accolades for her personal and professional accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Dale Harris and her husband, Ted, moved to The Forest at Duke, a retirement community in North Carolina, and she quickly became an active member of the community, serving as president of the Resident's Association; and

WHEREAS, Dale Harris will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her husband of 68 years, Ted; her children, Mary, Frances, Jennifer, and Timothy, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues; 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 the Honorable Dale Hutter Harris; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of the Honorable Dale Hutter Harris as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.