

24108511D

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 373

Offered March 6, 2024

*Celebrating the life of Helen V. Davis.*

Patron—Scott, D.

WHEREAS, Helen V. Davis, a champion for civil rights and a trailblazing community leader in Portsmouth, died on January 24, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Helen Davis was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and moved to Portsmouth with her family at a young age, then graduated from I.C. Norcom High School in 1944; and

WHEREAS, Helen Davis continued her education at Virginia Union University and what is now Norfolk State University, then completed additional studies through an extension program at The College of William & Mary in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Helen Davis joined the Central Civic Forum and Independent Voter's League, through which helped teach Black community members how to fill out registration forms and exercise their civic duty to vote; and

WHEREAS, Helen Davis served as the first female president of the Central Civic Forum, and her achievements with the organization led to the election of the first two Black members of the Portsmouth City Council, as well as the first Black judge and the first Black attorney for the Commonwealth in the city; and

WHEREAS, in 1960, Helen Davis supported and participated in student protests against discrimination at the local Woolworth store, and she fought to ensure that student protesters were not expelled for their courageous actions; and

WHEREAS, Helen Davis was passionate about the importance of a good education and gave generations of students the support they needed to become lifelong learners as a librarian in Portsmouth Public Schools for more than 30 years; and

WHEREAS, after her well-earned retirement, Helen Davis served as a member and vice chair of the Portsmouth School Board, where she played an important role in the appointment of the first Black superintendent of Portsmouth Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, Helen Davis also volunteered her time and leadership to the Urban League, the Portsmouth Chapter of Jack and Jill, Inc., and what is now Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center as its first Black female member of the board of directors; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by her husband, Howard, Helen Davis will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her daughters, Dianne and Carolyn, and their families; her adopted daughter, Gayle; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Helen V. Davis, a pillar of the Portsmouth community; 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 Helen V. Davis as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for her memory.