

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA -- 1997 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 747

On the death of Dr. Stephen J. Wright, Jr.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 21, 1997
Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 1997

WHEREAS, Dr. Stephen J. Wright, Jr., a resident of Hampton and one of the most prominent and accomplished American educators of the 20th century, died on April 16, 1996; and

WHEREAS, a native of Dillon, South Carolina, Stephen Wright earned his bachelor of science degree from Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) in 1934, his master's degree from Howard University in 1939, and his doctorate from New York University in 1943; and

WHEREAS, after a brief teaching experience in high school, Dr. Wright began his college teaching career at North Carolina College at Durham, returned to Hampton Institute in 1944 as professor of education and later as dean of the faculty, and in 1953, was appointed president of Bluefield State College in West Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 1956, Dr. Wright became president of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, widely regarded as one of the premier historically black institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, while at Fisk University, Dr. Wright was in the forefront of efforts to improve the quality of education at the nation's historically black colleges and universities, an effort that continued when he accepted the presidency of the United Negro College Fund, where he persevered in his attempts to improve educational opportunities for minority students; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Wright later served as trustee, consultant, vice president, acting president, and senior advisor to the College Entrance Examination Board, where he was a pioneer in the development of an educational equality program for minority students; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Wright served as chairman of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia from 1982 to 1990 and as chairman of the Outstanding Faculty Awards Committee from 1987 to 1990, and during his time of service on the state council, Dr. Wright demonstrated his commitment to the principles of equal access and inclusion through his vigilant monitoring of Virginia's progress in implementing the Virginia Plan for Equal Educational Opportunity in Higher Education; and

WHEREAS, during his long and exceptionally distinguished career, Dr. Wright served on innumerable boards, commissions, councils, and agencies; acted as educational consultant to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson; and was published widely in leading scholarly publications; and

WHEREAS, certainly one of the most influential educators of his era, Dr. Stephen J. Wright, Jr., leaves an unmatched legacy of service and dedication to the Commonwealth and the nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly mourn the loss of an extraordinary Virginian, Dr. Stephen J. Wright, Jr.; 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 Dr. Stephen J. Wright, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's deep and abiding respect for his lifetime of achievement, dedication, and service to his fellow citizens.

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