

2025 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 621

Celebrating the life of Marie Goodman Johnson.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 17, 2025

WHEREAS, Marie Goodman Johnson, a devoted educator in Richmond and a pioneer for Black women in the performing arts, died on October 16, 2024; and

WHEREAS, born in 1929, Marie Johnson was adopted by Fred and Florence Goodman and grew up in Richmond, where she became a member of First Baptist Church of South Richmond at a young age; and

WHEREAS, Marie Johnson graduated from Armstrong High School and continued her education at Virginia State University; she developed a passion for lifelong learning and subsequently studied at the Columbia University Teachers College, the University of Virginia, and The College of William & Mary; and

WHEREAS, Marie Johnson pursued a career in education and was one of the first teachers to integrate the previously all-white William Fox Elementary School; she spent the majority of her career inspiring students at John Marshall High School; and

WHEREAS, Marie Johnson primarily taught music and speech, but she was most proud of her role as a mentor who helped students develop self-confidence, self-respect, and pride in their communities; and

WHEREAS, outside of her career, Marie Johnson's beautiful mezzo-soprano voice made her a sought-after soloist at several Richmond churches; as she began to perform more often, she discovered a talent for acting and became the first Black actress to secure a role in *The Common Glory* by Paul Green, an annual patriotic play held in Williamsburg; and

WHEREAS, Marie Johnson went on to appear in 32 productions, earning numerous awards and accolades for her legacy of contributions to theatre and the performing arts; and

WHEREAS, Marie Johnson made appearances at the Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Swift Creek Mill Theatre in Colonial Heights, McCarter Theatre in New Jersey, Tanglewood Barn Theatre in North Carolina, Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Alabama, and the Caux Palace in Switzerland; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by her husband, Andrew, Marie Johnson will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her daughter Kelley, and her family, 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 Marie Goodman Johnson, a former teacher and a captivating vocalist and theatre actress; 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 Marie Goodman Johnson as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for her memory.

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