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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 882

Offered April 1, 2025

*Celebrating the life of the Honorable Willard H. Douglas, Jr.*

Patrons—Cousins, Carr, Anthony, Askew, Callsen, Cohen, Feggans, Gardner, Henson, Martinez, McQuinn, Price, Rasoul, Reaser, Sewell, Thomas and Tran

WHEREAS, the Honorable Willard H. Douglas, Jr., a trailblazing jurist who broke down many racial barriers in the legal profession and was the first Black Virginian to serve as a full-time judge in the Commonwealth, died on February 16, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Willard Douglas grew up in Amherst County and served the nation as a member of the United States Marine Corps during the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, after returning from his military service, Willard Douglas earned a bachelor's degree from Virginia Union University and a law degree from Howard University; he worked as an attorney on the United States Commission on Civil Rights and practiced law with the firm Hill, Tucker & Marsh; and

WHEREAS, Willard Douglas subsequently joined the Richmond Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, becoming the first Black assistant prosecutor in the city; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, Willard Douglas made history again when he was appointed as a judge of the Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, paving the way for future generations of Black judges across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Willard Douglas presided over the court with great fairness and wisdom, serving the Richmond community and the Commonwealth with integrity, dedication, and distinction; and

WHEREAS, outside of his legal career, Willard Douglas enhanced local life as a leader in several charitable, community, and professional organizations; and

WHEREAS, Willard Douglas will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by numerous family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Honorable Willard H. Douglas, Jr., a former judge of the Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court and the first full-time Black judge in the Commonwealth; 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 the Honorable Willard H. Douglas, Jr., as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.