

2024 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 693

Commending the Hanover Eight.

Agreed to by the Senate, October 27, 2025

WHEREAS, in 2025, Hanover County Public Schools honored the courage and enduring legacy of the Hanover Eight, the first eight Black students to attend previously all-white schools in Hanover County; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1960s, Black students in Hanover County attended the segregated John M. Gandy High School in Ashland, and students from outlying areas were forced to travel great distances to and from school every day; and

WHEREAS, after the Pupil Placement Board approved the placement of 10 Black students at Lee-Davis High School (now Mechanicsville High School) and Patrick Henry High School, the Hanover County Branch of the NAACP worked with a group of local families to select students that would integrate both schools in the fall of 1963; and

WHEREAS, Walter Lee, Norbert Lee, Phyllis Lee, Raymond Bagby, Jacqueline Holmes, and Blanche Holmes began attending Lee-Davis High School, while Arlene Thompson and Harriett Thompson began attending Patrick Henry High School; two other students chose to return to John M. Gandy High School before the start of the term; and

WHEREAS, the Hanover Eight endured prejudice, bullying, and a sense of isolation from other students, but their bravery in the face of adversity opened doors for future generations of students and represented a significant victory for the cause of educational equality in Hanover County; and

WHEREAS, to commemorate the legacy and achievements of the Hanover Eight, Hanover County Public Schools installed plaques at Patrick Henry High School and Mechanicsville High School recognizing the students' pivotal role in the Civil Rights Movement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the Hanover Eight hereby be commended for their accomplishments as torchbearers for equality in the education system; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to the surviving members of the Hanover Eight, Walter Lee, Norbert Lee, and Phyllis Lee, and the families of Raymond Bagby, Jacqueline Holmes, Blanche Holmes, Arlene Thompson, and Harriett Thompson, as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for their contributions to the history and heritage of the Commonwealth.

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