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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 89

Offered February 6, 2026

Celebrating the life of Eugene Williams.

 Patron—Deeds

WHEREAS, Eugene Williams, an honorable veteran, accomplished businessman, distinguished civil rights leader, and beloved member of the Charlottesville community, died on October 18, 2025; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Jefferson High School of Charlottesville and the Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Eugene Williams served his country honorably as a member of the United States Air Force; and

WHEREAS, Eugene Williams served as director of the Charlottesville office of the Black-owned Richmond Beneficial Insurance Company, earning top sales honors as he worked tirelessly for the well-being of his clients; and

WHEREAS, growing up during the era of segregation, Eugene Williams endured a number of injustices that would harden his resolve to fight for the equality of all throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, while serving as the president of the Charlottesville branch of the NAACP, Eugene Williams and his wife, Lorraine, led the effort to sue the Charlottesville School Board to force the board to adhere to the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*; and

WHEREAS, following the decision in *Dillard v. School Board of the City of Charlottesville*, Eugene Williams's daughters, Karol and Scheryl, were among the first Black students to attend the former Johnson Elementary School and Lane High School in Charlottesville; and

WHEREAS, in response to the razing of the Vinegar Hill neighborhood of Charlottesville in the 1960s, Eugene Williams cofounded the Dogwood Housing Limited Partnership with the mission to provide quality, affordable housing to individuals and families in need, building a portfolio of more than 60 units; and

WHEREAS, Eugene Williams' public advocacy over the years included his self-published newsletter, *Informed People Are Better People*, as well as a campaign to establish a state historical marker memorializing Charlottesville's role in the slave trade; and

WHEREAS, Eugene Williams was a generous mentor to an untold number of local leaders and activists who benefitted from his wisdom and experience; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his impact, Eugene Williams received several accolades and awards over the years, including being named a Paul Harris Fellow by the Blue Ridge Mountains Rotary Club and one of the "Distinguished Dozen" by *The Daily Progress*; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by his wife of 75 years, Lorraine, Eugene Williams will be fondly remembered and dearly by his loving daughters, Karol and Scheryl, and their families and by numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Eugene Williams, a trailblazing activist and civic leader of the Charlottesville community whose legacy of service and dedication inspires all who knew him; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Eugene Williams as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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