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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 199

Offered March 2, 2026

Commending The Ealey Project.

Patrons—Cousins, Clark, Cole, J.G., Cole, N.T., Dougherty, McPike, Schmidt and Ward

WHEREAS, The Ealey Project is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the legacy of the Honorable Roland J. "Duke" Ealey and to sharing untold and under-told stories from the history of Richmond's Jackson Ward; and

WHEREAS, Roland J. "Duke" Ealey was an accomplished civil rights attorney and former member of the House of Delegates whose legal and political career in Richmond spanned from 1940 until his death in 1992, during which time he was involved with many significant issues and events affecting countless lives; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Sasha Finch and James Vigeant purchased the property at 2 East Clay Street in Jackson Ward, which was formerly Roland J. "Duke" Ealey's office, and shortly thereafter discovered a trove of historic records related to his work; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the historical importance of these documents, The Ealey Project was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 2023 to act as a steward of the collection and to support further research into its contents; and

WHEREAS, to date, The Ealey Project has identified numerous records in the collection that shed light on Roland J. "Duke" Ealey's contributions to the civil rights movement, the legal system in Richmond, and the development of Jackson Ward, including material relating to *Brown v. Board of Education*, family displacement from the development of the Interstate Highway System, Massive Resistance, and the desegregation of federal court houses, which was successfully litigated at the United States Supreme Court in the case *Johnson v. Virginia*; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, The Ealey Project established an amended deed of gift with the Library of Virginia to deposit the collection at the library and ensure that it would be professionally archived and digitized and made available to the public; and

WHEREAS, in addition to preserving the Ealey collection, The Ealey Project's main aims are to collect video recordings of oral histories from longtime Jackson Ward residents and others who have stories to share, develop research into family displacement from the Interstate Highway System, and create educational mobile and fixed pop-up exhibits illuminating these stories; and

WHEREAS, The Ealey Project has formed a number of collaborations and partnerships with local organizations and institutions to advance its cause, including with the Historic Jackson Ward Association, the *Richmond Free Press*, the Richmond Public Library, the University of Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University, and the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, during the 2004 Session, the General Assembly designated June 20, in 2004 and in each succeeding year, as Delegate Roland J. Ealey Day in the Commonwealth, which The Ealey Project is committed to recognizing annually by honoring and remembering his contributions to Virginia; and

WHEREAS, through the leadership and devotion of its directors and staff, The Ealey Project promises to bring greater awareness of Roland J. "Duke" Ealey's impact as an attorney and legislator and to deepen our understanding of pivotal events from the 20th century; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That The Ealey Project hereby be commended for its efforts to honor the legacy of the Honorable Roland J. "Duke" Ealey and to foster greater understanding of the history of Jackson Ward, Richmond, and 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 Ealey Project as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the organization's mission and best wishes for its future success.

INTRODUCED

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