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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 264

Offered March 4, 2026

Commending the first Black students to integrate Caroline County Public Schools.

Patrons—Cole, N.T. and Kent

WHEREAS, during the 1965–1966 academic year, 13 Black students voluntarily began to attend formerly segregated schools in Caroline County, overcoming discrimination and prejudice to pave the way for future generations of Black students in the county and across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, after a court order forced Caroline County Public Schools to implement a “freedom of choice” system, in which students were permitted to choose which school they wished to attend, several local families decided to set an example for the good of community by sending their children to Caroline High School and Bowling Green Elementary School; and

WHEREAS, these students were Wayne Bates, Eric Foster, Alphonso Jackson Jr., Beryl Jackson, Wayne Jackson, Linda Johnson, Bryan McReynolds, Robert Morton, Clyde Rhodes, Betty Stewart, Pierpoint Williams, the Reverend Ernest Woodson, and Wanda Woodson Wallace; and

WHEREAS, these students often endured cruel treatment from some classmates and faculty members, both in and out of the classroom, affecting not only their ability to learn but their ability to build friendships and grow as individuals; and

WHEREAS, despite numerous obstacles, these students worked diligently to achieve their fullest potential and participated in various athletics programs and activities, including football, basketball, track and field, and band; and

WHEREAS, in 1967 and 1968, rulings in the case of *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* affirmed that the “freedom of choice” system had failed to adequately integrate schools in the Commonwealth as no white students had chosen to attend all-Black schools and only a small number of Black students had chosen to attend all-white schools; and

WHEREAS, the first Black students to integrate Caroline County Public Schools proved to be trailblazers, whose struggles led to greater acceptance for their peers once full racial integration was achieved in Caroline County Public Schools and across the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the first Black students to integrate Caroline County Public Schools hereby be commended on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of their courageous actions; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to representatives of the first Black students to integrate Caroline County Public Schools as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for their historic contributions to the advancement of civil rights and equality in the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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