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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 238

Offered March 9, 2026

*Celebrating the life of Eva Marie Coles Caldwell Baker.*

Patrons—Deeds; Delegates: Callsen, Laufer and Rasoul

WHEREAS, Eva Marie Coles Caldwell Baker, a dedicated and compassionate social worker and a dynamic community leader in Charlottesville, died on December 23, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the youngest of five children born to Leroy and Eva Coles, Marie Baker grew up in Buffalo, New York, where she attended local public schools; she continued her education by earning a bachelor's degree from Talladega College in Alabama, a master's degree from Smith College in Massachusetts, and master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work in Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Marie Baker began her career as a social worker at a children's hospital in Buffalo, then served as an associate professor of social work in Buffalo until she relocated to Washington, D.C., as a professor and assistant dean at the Howard University School of Social Work; and

WHEREAS, Marie Baker married her first husband, the late Arthur D. Caldwell, in 1957, and the couple were active leaders in the community and engaged members of Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, Marie Baker established the Buffalo Chapter of 100 Black Women and was a life member of the Buffalo (NY) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, Jack and Jill, Inc., and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; she became the first Black woman in her profession invited to join Zonta International, a nonprofit organization creating opportunities for women and girls around the world; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, Marie Baker and her second husband, John Baker, relocated to the Commonwealth and settled in Charlottesville, where she upheld her longstanding commitment to servant leadership; and

WHEREAS, Marie Baker enjoyed fellowship and worship with the Charlottesville community as a member of Sojourners United Church of Christ, where she faithfully provided leadership and served on numerous boards and committees, contributing greatly to the life and ministry of the church; and

WHEREAS, during her years in Charlottesville, Marie Baker was an influential civic and political advocate who spoke out against injustice and encouraged members of the community to participate in the democratic process, consistently reminding others of the importance of voting and civic engagement; and

WHEREAS, Marie Baker was a lifelong learner who deeply valued education and encouraged others to pursue knowledge and personal growth throughout their lives; and

WHEREAS, Marie Baker also demonstrated her organizational skills and commitment to excellence through her work with FOCUS Women's Resource Center, Charlottesville Newcomers Club, the African American Teaching Fellows, the African American Authors Book Club, and the Contemporary Club of Albemarle, where she was only the second Black woman ever admitted and held multiple leadership roles; and

WHEREAS, among many accolades for her personal and professional achievements, Marie Baker received the Brotherhood Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews in Buffalo and the 2019 National Coalition of 100 Black Women Phenomenal Woman Award from the 100 Black Women of the Charlottesville Metropolitan Area; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by her first husband, Arthur, and her second husband, John, Marie Baker will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her son, Keenan Caldwell; her daughter, Martha Caldwell; her grandsons, Keenan Arthur, Kameron Ashe, Kollin Austin, and Treavor Santiago; her great-grandson, Krew Alexander; and numerous other beloved 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 Eva Marie Coles Caldwell Baker, a highly admired volunteer leader and a tireless advocate for people in need in Charlottesville; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Eva Marie Coles Caldwell Baker as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

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