

2026 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 124

Celebrating the life of Edith Marie Kearney Heard.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 3, 2026
Agreed to by the Senate, March 5, 2026

WHEREAS, Edith Marie Kearney Heard, a trailblazer who championed workers' rights and African American causes, a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, and a treasured member of the Williamsburg community, died on February 6, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Edith “Cookie” Marie Kearney Heard served as a night auditor and supervisor in Colonial Williamsburg's accounting office, where she broke down barriers as one of the office's first Black employees; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated labor activist, Cookie Heard played a pivotal role in establishing the Colonial Williamsburg Food and Beverage Workers Union in the late 1960s and served as vice president of the organization after it merged with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union Local 32; and

WHEREAS, Cookie Heard's passion for lifelong learning led her to return to school at the age of 44 and to earn a bachelor's degree in history with a minor in secondary education from Christopher Newport University in 1989; and

WHEREAS, Cookie Heard spent time in Guadalajara, Mexico, as a student-teacher, and later returned home to host Mexican foreign exchange students and serve as a substitute teacher; and

WHEREAS, Cookie Heard fostered the relationship between The College of William & Mary (W&M) and the local Black community and contributed to the education of young people through her involvement with The Lemon Project: A Journey of Reconciliation and a course that culminated with the creation of the Hearth: Memorial to the Enslaved on W&M's campus; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of her leadership and extensive knowledge of the history of integration in Williamsburg, Cookie Heard was appointed to serve on the Descendant Advisory Board of The Local Black Histories Project, a community-engaged research partnership between W&M, the Village Initiative, and Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by her loving husband, Earnest, Cookie Heard will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by her children, Eric, William, Denise, Shelia, Earnestine, and Debra, and their families and by numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Edith Marie Kearney Heard, a cherished member of the Williamsburg community whose integrity, devotion, and service made an impact on countless lives; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Edith Marie Kearney Heard as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

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