

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 242

*Celebrating the life of the Honorable William T. Newman, Jr.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 9, 2026  
Agreed to by the Senate, March 11, 2026

WHEREAS, the Honorable William T. Newman, Jr., a public servant who broke down racial barriers in Arlington County, an esteemed jurist who presided over the 17th Judicial Circuit of Virginia for 30 years, and a trusted community leader who touched countless lives through his vision, integrity, and commitment to excellence, died on February 10, 2026; and

WHEREAS, a proud, lifelong resident of Arlington, William Newman grew up in the Green Valley neighborhood during segregation and experienced racial discrimination firsthand in his youth, which shaped his commitment to justice and fairness under the law; he attended the segregated Hoffman-Boston School before graduating from Wakefield High School in 1968; and

WHEREAS, William Newman earned a bachelor's degree from Ohio University in 1972, then worked as an actor to support himself while pursuing a legal degree from the Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law; and

WHEREAS, William Newman worked as a staff trademark attorney with the U.S. Department of Commerce from 1977 to 1980, then entered private practice and became a partner in the firm Carpenter, Newman, Martin, Berkowitz and Garnes; he worked diligently to advance the legal profession in the region and established the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys' Association in 1983; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, William Newman made history when he was elected as the first Black member of the Arlington County Board since its establishment, then became the first Black chair of the Arlington County Board in 1991; during his tenure in local government, he established the Arlington County Human Rights Commission and was a passionate advocate for public safety and resources to help members of the community overcome drug abuse; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1990s, William Newman also provided wise leadership to the region as president of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments, and he gathered a group of local residents and business leaders to form the Arlington Community Foundation, of which he was named president emeritus in 2006; and

WHEREAS, William Newman was appointed as a judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit of Virginia in March 1993 and presided over cases in Arlington County and the City of Falls Church with great fairness and wisdom for the next three decades; he was elected as chief judge in 2003 and held that position until his well-earned retirement in 2023; and

WHEREAS, William Newman's tenure on the bench was defined by his strict adherence to the law tempered with his deep sense of empathy and understanding that every individual deserved to be treated with dignity; and

WHEREAS, respected by his peers in the judicial system across the Commonwealth, William Newman served as a member of the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission and the Commission on Virginia Courts in the 21st Century, and he was a former chair of the Virginia Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission; and

WHEREAS, outside of his career, William Newman continued to perform in regional theatre productions, as well as movies and television programs; he was a member of Actors' Equity Association and the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists; and

WHEREAS, among many accolades for his personal and professional achievements, William Newman received the 2013 William L. Winston Award, the highest honor presented by the Arlington County Bar Foundation, and the 2019 Harry L. Carrico Outstanding Career Service Award, the highest honor presented by the Judicial Council of Virginia; he was also selected by *Washingtonian* magazine as one of the Best Trial Judges in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, William Newman will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Sheila Johnson, and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues; 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 the Honorable William T. Newman, Jr., a trailblazing public servant, a respected judge, and a pillar of the Arlington community; 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 the Honorable William T. Newman, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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