

2024 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 642

Commending Tonia Edwards.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, May 13, 2024

WHEREAS, Tonia Edwards, a beloved daughter and sister and treasured member of the Hampton Roads community, overcame extraordinary circumstances to graduate from Norfolk State University in 2024; and

WHEREAS, affectionately known by friends and family as "Nada," Tonia Edwards' life changed forever in 2017 at the age of 16 when she suffered a traumatic brain injury as the result of a car accident; and

WHEREAS, in addition to a broken pelvis and collarbone, Tonia Edwards remained in a coma for approximately five months, during which time she was surrounded by family, friends, and classmates who prayed daily for her recovery; and

WHEREAS, after Tonia Edwards awoke from her coma, she underwent months of physical, occupational, and speech therapy at Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters in Norfolk in an effort to restore her mobility and other capacities; and

WHEREAS, throughout this period of rehabilitation, Tonia Edwards was motivated by a singular goal—to walk across the stage at her high school graduation; and

WHEREAS, during the graduation ceremony for Woodrow Wilson High School in Portsmouth on June 15, 2019, the audience erupted with applause as it watched Tonia Edwards bravely stand unassisted for the first time and cross the stage to receive her diploma; and

WHEREAS, with the support of a \$25,000 Beat the Odds scholarship that she won as the result of an essay she wrote sharing her story, Tonia Edwards next attended Norfolk State University, where she developed an interest in social work and criminal justice and graduated in May 2024; and

WHEREAS, Tonia Edwards has demonstrated a positive and indomitable spirit and unwavering faith throughout the challenges she has faced and is an inspiration to all Virginians; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Tonia Edwards hereby be commended for her bravery and strength of character in the unrelenting pursuit of her dreams; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Tonia Edwards as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for her accomplishments and best wishes for her continued success.

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