

# 2024 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 653

*Commending Patsy Pettus.*

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

WHEREAS, Patsy Pettus, a distinguished member of the Richmond community who has cemented her legacy as a philanthropist and historical preservationist through her support of a number of high-profile restoration projects in the city in recent years, celebrated her 95th birthday in 2024; and

WHEREAS, after living in Arkansas and Missouri up to the age of 12, Patsy Pettus and her family moved to the Commonwealth in 1941 and shortly thereafter settled in the Forest Hill neighborhood of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, Patsy Pettus went on to marry her fellow John Marshall High School classmate, Hunter Pettus, Jr., in 1951 and to devote many years to raising the couple's four boys; and

WHEREAS, in her later years, Patsy Pettus developed an interest in architecture that she cultivated by enrolling in an art program at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and by traveling to many of the world's great cities; and

WHEREAS, the origins of Patsy Pettus' campaign to preserve the architectural wonders of Richmond and to elevate some of its most ambitious building initiatives may be traced to a \$1 million gift she presented to VCU when the university was building its Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in 2016; and

WHEREAS, after ICA used her funding to construct its signature stairway, named the Patsy K. and Hunter R. Pettus, Jr. Staircase in her honor, Patsy Pettus focused her efforts on saving historically noteworthy staircases throughout Richmond, earning her the affectionate sobriquet "Staircase Lady"; and

WHEREAS, through her generous financial support, Patsy Pettus has since left her mark on the staircases of some of Richmond's most notable landmarks, including The Valentine, Monumental Church, the Masons' Hall, and the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, as well as the Battersea plantation villa in Petersburg; and

WHEREAS, Patsy Pettus has already dedicated \$1 million toward the renovation and expansion of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, including the construction of a new staircase to be named in her honor, showing no signs of diminishing in her noble project to support worthy architectural endeavors in the Commonwealth's capital for the benefit of future generations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Patsy Pettus hereby be commended for her extraordinary contributions to the architectural treasures of Richmond on the occasion of her 95th birthday; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Patsy Pettus as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for her generosity and appreciation for her many good deeds in service to Richmond and the Commonwealth.

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