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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 127

Offered January 18, 2022

Celebrating the life of Claire Robinson Askew.

Patron—Hayes

WHEREAS, Claire Robinson Askew, an esteemed educator and community leader who contributed greatly to the development of the City of Chesapeake while overseeing its Parks and Recreation Department and Building Maintenance Department, died on September 10, 2021; and

WHEREAS, affectionately known by friends and family by her middle name "Dedidra," Claire Askew was a standout athlete at Clearview High School in Easley, South Carolina, and later earned a bachelor's degree in health and physical education from Shaw University in 1966; and

WHEREAS, Claire Askew embarked upon her career as a teacher and coach at Bentley High School in Chester, South Carolina, fostering the educational ambitions of many young people while leading the girls' basketball team to a championship title; and

WHEREAS, Claire Askew relocated shortly thereafter to the Commonwealth and worked briefly with the Portsmouth Parks & Recreation Department before joining the Chesapeake Parks & Recreation Department as a recreation specialist in 1976; and

WHEREAS, Claire Askew's early responsibilities with the Chesapeake Parks & Recreation Department included managing the Indian River Community Center, where she was beloved by children and parents alike for creating a safe and enjoyable environment that was welcoming to all; and

WHEREAS, Claire Askew's accomplishments as a recreation specialist led her to be promoted to district supervisor and then to division director in 1985, as she was tasked with overseeing a new division formed from the Chesapeake Parks & Recreation Department and Building Maintenance Department; and

WHEREAS, Claire Askew was the first African American woman to head a municipal department in Chesapeake's history and was an exemplary leader during her tenure, guiding the city's development of several parks and community centers, while spearheading various committees and programs that brought the residents of Chesapeake closer; and

WHEREAS, Claire Askew was a mentor to many of her employees and colleagues and was actively involved in promoting minority leaders in local government through her work with the Conference of Minority Public Administrators and other organizations; and

WHEREAS, inspired throughout her life by her faith, Claire Askew enjoyed worship and fellowship with her community at The Mount at Chesapeake for many years, where she served with both the women's and seniors' ministries; and

WHEREAS, Claire Askew will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by her loving husband of 28 years, Irvin, 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 Claire Robinson Askew, revered community leader of Chesapeake whose kindness and generosity touched 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 Claire Robinson Askew as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

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