

2022 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 62

Celebrating the life of Marie Frankie Muse Freeman.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 7, 2022

WHEREAS, Marie Frankie Muse Freeman, an esteemed attorney who made history as the first woman to be appointed to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, died on January 12, 2018; and

WHEREAS, born and raised in Danville, Frankie Muse Freeman enrolled at the Hampton Institute at the age of 16 and attended from 1933 to 1936, then later earned a law degree in 1947 from the Howard University School of Law, where she was a member of the Epsilon Sigma Iota Sorority; and

WHEREAS, Frankie Muse Freeman established her own private practice in 1948, specializing in pro bono, divorce, and criminal cases, and after two years ventured into the field of civil rights law when she became legal counsel to the NAACP legal team that filed suit against the St. Louis Board of Education in 1949; and

WHEREAS, Frankie Muse Freeman was the lead attorney in 1954 for the landmark NAACP case *Davis et al. v. the St. Louis Housing Authority*, which ended legal racial discrimination in public housing within the city; and

WHEREAS, Frankie Muse Freeman was nominated by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964 to serve as a member of the United States Commission on Civil Rights and was approved by the United States Senate the same year, making history as the first woman to serve on the commission; and

WHEREAS, Frankie Muse Freeman would be subsequently reappointed to the United States Commission on Civil Right by Presidents Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, and James "Jimmy" E. Carter, Jr., holding the position until 1979; that same year, she was appointed as inspector general for the Community Services Administration, a position she carried out for the remainder of President Jimmy Carter's term; and

WHEREAS, following her service in the federal government, Frankie Muse Freeman returned to St. Louis to practice law and at the age of 90 was still practicing with Montgomery Hollie & Associates, L.L.C.; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Frankie Muse Freeman joined 15 other former federal officials to form a bipartisan Citizens' Commission on Civil Rights, a group committed to ending racial discrimination and proffering remedies to counteract its effects; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of her leadership role in the civil rights movement, Frankie Muse Freeman was inducted into the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site in Atlanta in 2007; and

WHEREAS, Frankie Muse Freeman's expertise was valued by many, including President Barack H. Obama II, who appointed her to serve as a member of the Commission on Presidential Scholars in 2015; and

WHEREAS, an engaged member of the community, Frankie Muse Freeman's many volunteer activities included adult Sunday school classes at Washington Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church in St. Louis and service on the board of the World Affairs Council of St. Louis, furthering the organization's mission to promote understanding, engagement, relationships, and leadership in world affairs; and

WHEREAS, the 14th national president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Frankie Muse Freeman published her memoir, *A Song of Faith and Hope*, in 2003; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by her husband and son, Frankie Muse Freeman is fondly remembered and dearly missed by her daughter, grandchildren, and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Marie Frankie Muse Freeman, a prominent civil rights attorney whose professional accomplishments 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 Marie Frankie Muse Freeman as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for her memory.

ENROLLED

HR62ER