

2022 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 23

Commending the Richmond Public Art Commission.

Agreed to by the Senate, March 9, 2022

WHEREAS, the Richmond Public Art Commission, in coordination with dedicated citizens, enabled the construction and completion of the Maggie L. Walker Statue and Plaza in 2017 after a decades-long campaign to honor the life and legacy of Maggie L. Walker; the site serves as a unique monument to the advancements and achievements of women and members of the Black community in Richmond; and

WHEREAS, Maggie Walker touched countless lives through her roles as an entrepreneur, educator, and trailblazing leader in banking; as the founder of St. Luke Penny Savings Bank, she became the first woman in the United States to charter and serve as president of a bank; and

WHEREAS, Maggie Walker also served on the boards of many community organizations, such as the National Association of Colored Women and the Virginia Industrial School for Girls, was the vice president of the Richmond branch of the NAACP, and established a local newspaper, the *St. Luke Herald*; and

WHEREAS, soon after Maggie Walker's death in 1934, concepts were developed for a monument honoring her life and legacy; however, these efforts gained little traction until the late 1990s after the placement of the Arthur Ashe Monument; and

WHEREAS, thanks in large part to the determined advocacy of the Richmond Public Art Commission, the Richmond Planning Commission approved the construction of the Maggie L. Walker Statue and Plaza in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the 10-foot bronze statue of Maggie Walker was designed by Maryland-based artist Antonio Tobias Mendez and features low-relief panels depicting Maggie Walker's myriad contributions to the community, while the surrounding plaza was completed by the engineering firm VHB of Boston and incorporates benches adorned with important dates and events from her life; and

WHEREAS, the Maggie L. Walker Statue and Plaza serves as a gateway to Jackson Ward, one of Richmond's most prominent historically Black neighborhoods, which is also the location of the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site at her former residence; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the Richmond Public Art Commission hereby be commended for its role in the creation of the Maggie L. Walker Statue and Plaza and its contributions to historical interpretation and cultural life in Richmond; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Richmond Public Art Commission as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's appreciation for the importance of the Maggie L. Walker Statue and Plaza.

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