

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 208

By Love

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Yvonne Y. Clark of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Yvonne Y. Clark; and

WHEREAS, Y.Y. Clark was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born on April 13, 1929, in Houston, Texas, Georgianna Yvonne Young Clark was the daughter of Dr. Milton Young, Jr., M.D., a general practitioner and surgeon, and Hortense Houston Young, a library scientist and journalist; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Clark was awarded a full scholarship to attend the University of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1947; when administrators discovered she was African American, the university rescinded the scholarship due to its segregation policy; following the threat of a lawsuit by the Young family, the university paid for her to attend Howard University in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, Y.Y. Clark was the first and only woman in her graduating class of 300 engineering students to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering, earning top honors; however, she was not permitted to march with her male classmates and instead received her diploma in the office of the university president; and

WHEREAS, after being rejected for a number of positions due to her gender, Mrs. Clark began work at Frankford Arsenal Gauge Labs in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; when she was twenty-five, she moved to the Electronic Tube Division at Radio Corporation of America (RCA) in Montclair, New Jersey, where she designed electrical equipment with eighteen male colleagues; and

WHEREAS, she returned to the South following her wedding and attempted to obtain a job at the Ford Glass Plant, but she was told that they had no use for her; undaunted, she turned to Tennessee State University (TSU) and asked if they needed an engineering professor; soon thereafter, she became the first woman to serve on the faculty of the College of Engineering and Technology at TSU; and

WHEREAS, Y.Y. Clark worked with the U.S. government during summers in the 1960s since TSU was not a year-round university at that time; she worked as an aerospace engineer (flight general) at NASA Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, investigating the Saturn V rocket booster engines' hot spot issues, and at the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Texas, on the moon rock samples container for transporting moon rocks back to Earth; and

WHEREAS, a licensed professional engineer, Mrs. Clark became the first African-American woman to receive a master's degree in engineering management from Vanderbilt University in 1970; she returned to the Ford Glass Plant and was hired as the first woman engineer at the plant, joining the design team to rebuild the float glass furnace; and

WHEREAS, affectionately called TSU's First Lady of Engineering, Y.Y. Clark returned to TSU and taught mechanical engineering for a total of fifty-five years; she twice served as department head and acted as a freshman advisor for all incoming students to the College of Engineering and Technology. Upon her retirement in 2011, she was granted Professor Emeritus status; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Clark was a fellow and life member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), which she integrated the year after she graduated from Howard University; she also served on the SWE Executive Committee, was a member of the American Society of Engineering Education, and was a charter member of the first State chapter of Pi Tau Sigma, the National Mechanical Honorary Society – Alpha Delta Chapter; and

WHEREAS, she chartered student chapters at TSU for SWE, ASME, and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers; and

WHEREAS, ever committed to giving back to her community, Y.Y. Clark served as a member of the Music City Chamber of Commerce and volunteered at the Eighteenth Avenue Family Enrichment Community Center; she was a charter member and life member of the Nashville Alumnae chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the Hendersonville Area Chapter of The Links, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, throughout her lifetime, she was the recipient of numerous awards, including the Women of Color Technology Award for Educational Leaders, the Distinguished Engineering Educator Award, the Distinguished Service Award from the Tennessee Society of Professional Engineers, the Educator of the Year Award from the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Nashville Alumnae chapter, and the President's Distinguished University Award from TSU for fifty years of loyalty, dedication, and determination during her academic career; she was also a TSU link for the Order of the Engineer; and

WHEREAS, Y.Y. Clark was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, she was the proud mother of Milton Herbert Clark, Sr., and Carol Yvonne Lawson and the devoted grandmother of Paris Nicole Lawson and Milton Herbert Clark, Jr.; she is lovingly remembered by her son-in-law, Eric Lawson; her brother, Dr. C. Milton Young III, M.D., and her sister-in-law, Waltraud Young; and

WHEREAS, she was preceded in death by her beloved husband of thirty-three years, William F. "Bill" Clark, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Y.Y. Clark leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Yvonne Y. Clark, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Clark.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.