



2009 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 84

1 **Relating to:** the life and public service of Velma Hamilton.

2 Whereas, Velma Fern Bell Hamilton, who for decades served as a devoted
3 educator and active citizen, passed away at the age of 99 on Thursday, July 9, 2009,
4 in Atlanta, Georgia; and

5 Whereas, Velma Bell was born in Pontotoc, Mississippi, on February 28, 1910,
6 graduated as valedictorian from Beloit High School in 1928, and earned her
7 bachelor's degree from Beloit College in 1930 and her master's degree in sociology
8 from the University of Wisconsin in 1933; and

9 Whereas, Velma Bell met Harry Lemuel Hamilton in North Carolina in 1931,
10 they married in 1934, moved to Madison, Wisconsin, in 1942, and together raised
11 three children; and

12 Whereas, Velma Hamilton served her communities as an educator in numerous
13 positions, first as an assistant professor at Bennett College in Gastonia, North
14 Carolina, later as the first African American teacher at Madison Vocational School

1 in Madison, Wisconsin, and as chair of the General Studies Department at Madison
2 Area Technical College from 1970 to 1975; and

3 Whereas, Velma Hamilton's dedication to education continued into retirement
4 when she traveled throughout the Midwest as an evaluator of vocational and
5 technical schools for the North Central Accrediting Association, and she and her
6 husband, as members of Friends of International Students, also welcomed hundreds
7 of University of Wisconsin students from around the world to Madison; and

8 Whereas, Velma Hamilton served the Madison community as the first
9 president of the Madison NAACP, as a member, committee member, and church
10 moderator at First Congregational Church, as a member of the Wisconsin Committee
11 on Aging, and as a member of the Governor's Commission on Human Rights; and

12 Whereas, in recognition of her dedication to education and family, Velma
13 Hamilton was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Lakeland
14 College and an honorary Doctor of Humanities from Beloit College, was recognized
15 as the 1974 Wisconsin Mother of the Year, and was honored when the Madison
16 Metropolitan School District changed the name of Van Hise Middle School to Velma
17 Hamilton Middle School in 1992; now, therefore, be it

18 ***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That*** the members of the
19 Wisconsin legislature commend Velma Hamilton for her decades of public service to
20 the community of Madison and the state of Wisconsin, for her dedication to teaching
21 and education, and for her grace and spirit; express their deep sorrow at her death;
22 and extend their sincere condolences to her family and friends; and

23 ***Be it further resolved, That*** the assembly chief clerk shall provide a copy of
24 this joint resolution to Velma Hamilton's son Dr. Harry Hamilton, Jr., of Sunriver,

1 Oregon, and to her daughters, Patricia Hamilton of Peachtree City, Georgia, and Dr.

2 Muriel Hamilton of San Jose, California.

3 (END)