Relating to: the life and public service of Representative Annette Polly Williams.

Whereas, former representative to the Wisconsin Assembly Annette Polly Williams was born on January 10, 1937, and died on November 9, 2014; and

Whereas, Annette Polly Williams, known as Polly, was born in Belzoni, Mississippi, graduated from Milwaukee’s North Division High School, and earned a bachelor’s degree from UW-Milwaukee in 1975; and

Whereas, Polly Williams served as a Democratic state representative for the 10th Assembly District in Milwaukee, being first elected in 1980 and announcing her retirement in 2010, representing central Milwaukee and Glendale; and

Whereas, Polly Williams became the longest-serving female legislator in either house, serving the state for 30 years; and

Whereas, Polly Williams was the author of the nation’s first school choice legislation and was instrumental in creating the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program in 1989; and
Whereas, Polly Williams served on the Assembly’s Education Reform Committee beginning in 1999 and was named chairperson in 2009, and also served on many other committees throughout her legislative career; and

Whereas, Polly Williams was the first African-American and female candidate for Milwaukee County Executive in 1992; and

Whereas, Polly Williams was cited in the *New York Times* as one of 13 innovative thinkers in education in 1997; and

Whereas, Polly Williams appeared on news programs such as CBS’s *60 Minutes*, NBC’s *Today*, ABC’s *World News*, and PBS’s *MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour*; and

Whereas, Polly Williams lectured at universities such as Harvard, Yale, Marquette, Stanford, Johns Hopkins, and Minnesota; and

Whereas, Polly Williams received the National Black Caucus of State Legislators’ President’s Award for Distinguished Service in 1990, the UW-Milwaukee Alumni Association’s Distinguished Alumnus award in 1994, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from UW-Milwaukee in 1998, and was named one of *Education Week*’s “Faces of the 20th Century”; and

Whereas, Polly Williams received a presidential invitation to the White House Conference on Parental Choice in 1989, was a Visiting Fellow at the Auckland Institute of Technology in New Zealand in 1993, was a Scholar in Residence at the National Alliance of Black School Educators in 1996, was financial secretary to the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, and a presidential elector for Barack Obama in 2008; and

Whereas, Polly Williams was described as “a legend” and “a warrior” and her career as “groundbreaking” by those who knew her; and
Whereas, Polly Williams was mother to four children, grandmother to seven children, and a great-grandmother; now, therefore be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the Wisconsin State Legislature salutes Annette Polly Williams’s public service and mourns her passing; and

Be it further resolved, That the assembly chief clerk shall provide a copy of this joint resolution to her children, Winston, Mildred, Kimberly, and Krystal.

(END)