



HR0004

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1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, In 1951, Henrietta Lacks visited The Johns Hopkins  
3 Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, one of only a few hospitals  
4 that would treat poor African Americans; and

5 WHEREAS, Henrietta Lacks began receiving treatment for  
6 cervical cancer; a sample of her cells was taken and sent to  
7 researcher Dr. George Gey, who had been collecting cells from  
8 all patients who sought treatment at Johns Hopkins for cervical  
9 cancer; at that time, there were no protocols for informing  
10 patients or for getting consent for research of their cell or  
11 tissue specimens; and

12 WHEREAS, While all the other samples quickly died, the  
13 cells from Henrietta Lacks doubled every 20 to 24 hours; her  
14 cells, known as "HeLa" cells, are still being used today to  
15 study the effects of toxins, drugs, hormones, and viruses on  
16 the growth of cancer cells without the need to experiment on  
17 humans; her cells have also been used in the development of  
18 treatments for polio, leukemia, AIDS, chemotherapy, in vitro  
19 fertilization, and in the study of the effects of zero gravity  
20 in space; and

21 WHEREAS, Henrietta Lacks passed away on October 4, 1951,  
22 but her "immortal cells" continue to impact the world; there

1 are 17,000 U.S. patents that involve HeLa cells; and

2 WHEREAS, Johns Hopkins University recently announced that  
3 it will name a new research building on campus in honor of  
4 Henrietta Lacks, an announcement that was made during the  
5 university's ninth annual Henrietta Lacks Memorial Lecture  
6 series; and

7 WHEREAS, The building is an enduring testament to a beloved  
8 mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother and generations of  
9 miraculous discoveries that have altered the landscape of  
10 modern medicine and benefited humanity; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
12 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
13 we recognize the profound effect that Henrietta Lacks and her  
14 "immortal cells" have had on millions of lives around the  
15 world, and we commend Johns Hopkins University on honoring her;  
16 and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
18 presented to the family of Henrietta Lacks and John Hopkins  
19 University as a symbol of our respect and esteem.