
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 979 Session of
2014

INTRODUCED BY PARKER, V. BROWN, DiGIROLAMO, COHEN, LUCAS,
FRANKEL, KIRKLAND, CLAY, DONATUCCI, BROWNLEE, MILLARD,
BISHOP, WHEATLEY, KINSEY, THOMAS, GIBBONS, YOUNGBLOOD,
CALTAGIRONE, McNEILL, MIRABITO, READSHAW, McCARTER, MURT,
FLECK AND MAHONEY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2014

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
SEPTEMBER 10, 2014

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and honoring Michele A. Roberts on her election as
2 the new Executive Director of the National Basketball Players
3 Association.

4 WHEREAS, Michele A. Roberts was elected as the Executive
5 Director of the National Basketball Players Association on July
6 28, 2014; and

7 WHEREAS, Ms. Roberts led the pack of more than 300
8 candidates, receiving 32 of 34 votes cast to become the first
9 woman to head a major North American professional sports union;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Born on September 14, 1956, Ms. Roberts was raised
12 by a proud and independent single mother in the Melrose Houses
13 in the Bronx, New York; and

14 WHEREAS, At a young age, Ms. Roberts understood the value of
15 a quality education, which served as the catalyst for her
16 stellar academic performance in her public school, leading to a

1 scholarship to the prestigious Masters School for girls, where
2 she became a youth trailblazer by establishing the institution's
3 first black student union *Pamoja*, Swahili for "together"; and

4 WHEREAS, Ms. Roberts walked into the courtyard of Wesleyan
5 University determined to become a public defender, earning a
6 bachelor's degree in 1977 and a juris doctorate from the Boalt
7 Hall School of Law at the University of California at Berkeley
8 in 1980; and

9 WHEREAS, Armed with an innate desire to serve, Ms. Roberts
10 quickly became a well-respected and trusted public defender,
11 remaining deeply rooted in the importance of staying grounded in
12 the concerns and opinions of the people she served, regardless
13 of their personal status or condition; and

14 WHEREAS, Ms. Roberts is not only revered by her clients, but
15 also by her peers, who often lined the front rows of courtrooms
16 across the country to observe her unique ability to serve as the
17 13th juror, capable of seeing the case as the jury sees it,
18 resulting in numerous victories and earning the position of
19 Chief of Trial Division at the Public Defender Service for the
20 District of Columbia; and

21 WHEREAS, Courageous in her personal desire for professional
22 achievement, Ms. Roberts transitioned into private practice,
23 welcoming the most challenging criminal cases and civil matters,
24 rapidly earning the reputation as one of the best trial lawyers
25 in Washington, DC, and later transferring her skills to white-
26 collar litigation after joining the firm Shea & Gardner; and

27 WHEREAS, Ms. Roberts' successful professional record led to a
28 partnership position in the litigation group at the renowned
29 Washington, DC law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom
30 where she continues her national status as a leading trial

1 attorney; and

2 WHEREAS, In the course of her career, Ms. Roberts has
3 conducted more than 100 trials, earning numerous awards and
4 recognitions, including being named by the Washingtonian
5 Magazine the finest pure trial lawyer in Washington, DC, and the
6 recipient of the 2011 Business Trial Lawyer of the Year at the
7 Chambers USA Awards of Excellence; and

8 WHEREAS, Ms. Roberts is also a highly sought-after lecturer,
9 serving as an adjunct member of the faculty at Harvard Law
10 School and an instructor with the National Institute of Trial
11 Advocacy; and

12 WHEREAS, In shattering the glass ceiling for women in
13 professional sports unions, Ms. Roberts' ability to successfully
14 rise above doubts and opposition contributed to her competitive
15 edge among prospective applicants and ultimately earned her the
16 position of Executive Director of the National Basketball
17 Players Association; therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize and
19 honor Michele A. Roberts on the extraordinary and historic
20 accomplishment of her election as the Executive Director of
21 National Basketball Players Association.