

No. R-247. House concurrent resolution honoring Jane Williamson for her exemplary administrative and curatorial leadership of the Rokeby Museum.

(H.C.R.198)

Offered by: Representatives Lanpher of Vergennes, Van Wyck of Ferrisburgh, and Devereux of Mount Holly

Whereas, in 1793, Thomas Robinson purchased the Rokeby, a farmstead in Ferrisburgh that served as the Robinson family's residence for four generations until 1961, when, in accordance with Elizabeth Donoway Robinson's direction, it became a museum, and

Whereas, in the early 19th century, the Rokeby farm featured Merino sheep raising before its conversion to a dairy operation, and

Whereas, Rowland Thomas Robinson (1796–1879) and his wife, Rachel Gilpin Robinson (1799–1862), were prominent Vermont abolitionists who welcomed fugitive slaves into their home, making the Rokeby a major stop on the Underground Railroad, and

Whereas, Jane Williamson, who holds both masters' degrees in library science and historic preservation, arrived at the Rokeby as a volunteer in 1989, organized the museum's archives, and became its director in 1995, and

Whereas, her first directorship achievement was the National Park Service's 1997 designation of the Rokeby as a National Historic Landmark, and

Whereas, she spearheaded an approximately decade-long one-million-dollar-plus fundraising campaign and construction effort that in 2013 culminated in the opening of the Underground Railroad Education Center, a modern multi-gallery exhibition building placing the Rokeby's role as an Underground Railroad stop center stage, and

Whereas, the new building has increased the Rokeby Museum's attendance and is the home for both the permanent "Free & Safe" exhibit as well as temporary exhibits such as 2017's "Yours in the Cause: Faces of Radical Abolition," and

Whereas, Jane Williamson has organized complementary educational programs related to the exhibits, the museum's collections, and the site's historic structures, as well facilitated forums focused on contemporary social justice issues, and

Whereas, after nearly three decades, Jane Williamson has concluded her role as the director of the Rokeby Museum, having enhanced the institution in all respects, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Jane Williamson for her exemplary administrative and curatorial leadership of the Rokeby Museum, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Jane Williamson and to the Rokeby Museum.