

HONORING LULA BELL HOUSTON

HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Lula Bell Houston of Davidson, North Carolina. Ms. Houston retired in May 2004 from Davidson College, my alma mater, after 57 years of service in the college laundry. The significance of this milestone in the Davidson community is matched only by the devotion that Ms. Houston has brought to her job everyday for over half a century.

Born in 1923 (just three years after the current laundry building was constructed), Ms. Houston worked for a year in Davidson's dining service from 1943-44. She spent the next few years raising a family, but returned in 1947 to work at the college laundry. She has been there ever since, waking up every weekday morning at 4:15 a.m., to ensure that she would be there for the 6:30 a.m. start of the work day. Ms. Houston originally took the job as a means of supporting herself and her two young children after her first husband left them, but the students have kept her here long after her children have grown up and had kids of their own.

The biggest legacy that Ms. Houston leaves the college and the town of Davidson is her warm personality and loving nature. She was

always ready with a hug and a smile to all who came to drop off their laundry. Student after student shared stories and memories about Ms. Houston and all spoke of the genuine love in her voice when she greets them and how she has been like a grandmother to them all. The college has figured that she has cared for the laundry of all but 1,226 of the college's 19,731 living alumni—a lot of surrogate grandchildren.

Davidson College honored Ms. Houston in the best way possible, naming the laundry building after her. The Town of Davidson commemorated that sunny day of April 29, 2004 by declaring it "Lula Bell Houston Day." At Spring Convocation the day before, the Omicron Delta Kappa honorary leadership fraternity presented Ms. Houston with its Staff Appreciation Award, and in 2002, the SAE fraternity presented Ms. Houston with \$500, a dozen roses, and a trophy recognizing her as "The Spirit of Davidson."

As an article featured on the college's website puts it, "Few retirees in local history have been so royally heralded." Ms. Houston deserves every bit of that recognition for her long and tireless service to the college and her part in the lives of thousands of Davidson students over the years. I join my fellow Davidson alumni and other members of the Davidson community past and present in commending Ms. Lula Bell Houston and celebrating her achievement.

I submit for the RECORD a news article with more about Ms. Houston.