

2001 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 848

Offered February 1, 2001

On the death of Richard W. Hassell.

Patrons—Robinson, Diamonstein, Drake, Jones, J.C., Moss, Thomas, Van Yahres and Williams

WHEREAS, Richard W. Hassell, Norfolk's "Good Samaritan" for more than 35 years, died on January 22, 2001; and

WHEREAS, Richard Hassell returned to Norfolk in 1939, having left the employ of the late Tex Ritter in Hollywood, where he had been asked to appear in such movies as "Gone with the Wind," "Showboat," and "The Ten Commandments"; and

WHEREAS, in Norfolk, Richard Hassell assisted his mother, who ran a soup kitchen during the Great Depression, in her continuing charitable efforts; and

WHEREAS, in 1964, Richard Hassell granted his mother's dying wish that he carry on her work by founding "Christian Action," a one-man charitable organization that helped the elderly, the poor, and those affected by fire and natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, Richard Hassell ran "Christian Action" from his home, funded it from his Social Security checks, and relied on the assistance and donations of area residents and businesses; and

WHEREAS, in 1988, Richard Hassell started serving annual holiday dinners at the Open Door Chapel, providing the hungry, the homeless, and the lonely with transportation, food, and fellowship; and

WHEREAS, his good deeds won Richard Hassell repeated recognition, from the General Assembly and from NBC's Nightly News, among others; and

WHEREAS, nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, Richard Hassell was named the Vivian Carter Mason Meritorious Service Award winner in 1991, and, characteristically, Richard Hassell never made it to the award ceremony, stopping instead on the way to help the victims of a house fire; and

WHEREAS, motivated not by a quest for glory or personal recognition, but rather by a simple and selfless desire to help those less fortunate than himself, Richard Hassell leaves a matchless legacy of sustained, generous, effective, and compassionate service to the people of Hampton Roads; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly note with great sadness the passing of Norfolk's "Good Samaritan," Richard W. Hassell; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Richard W. Hassell as an expression of the great respect in which his memory is held by the members of the General Assembly and the people of Virginia.

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