

## 2002 SESSION

ENROLLED

### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 512

*On the death of Major General Richard L. Irby.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 8, 2002  
Agreed to by the Senate, March 9, 2002

WHEREAS, Major General Richard L. Irby of Lexington, superintendent emeritus of the Virginia Military Institute, died on March 6, 2002; and

WHEREAS, a native of Blackstone, General Irby was a 1939 graduate of VMI, where he starred on the football and baseball teams and was one of the first recipients of an athletic scholarship from the Institute; and

WHEREAS, following graduation, General Irby was commissioned in the cavalry branch of the United States Army, commencing a distinguished 31-year career during which he served in three wars, earned numerous decorations for valor, and rose from troop commander to commanding general; and

WHEREAS, General Irby served in the China-Burma Theatre during World War II and was a battalion commander with the First Cavalry Division in Korea, where he earned the Silver Star; and

WHEREAS, in 1967, at the age of 49, General Irby qualified as a helicopter pilot, earning his pilot wings just before departing for Vietnam, where he earned his second Silver Star and served as assistant division commander of the renowned First Cavalry Division; and

WHEREAS, among his numerous military decorations, General Irby earned, in addition to his two Silver Stars, a Distinguished Service Medal, a Legion of Merit with three oak leaf clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device and two oak leaf clusters; and

WHEREAS, General Irby, a graduate and former instructor of the Army Command and General Staff College and a graduate of the Army War College, earned a master's degree in international affairs from George Washington University and was awarded an honorary LL.D. degree from Washington and Lee University; and

WHEREAS, during General Irby's tenure as superintendent of VMI from 1971 to 1981, the Institute enjoyed a sizeable increase in enrollment, an enhanced academic program, and exceptional success in intercollegiate athletics—all despite substantial anti-military feeling resulting from the conclusion of the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, also under General Irby's leadership, VMI embarked on its most successful capital campaign, raising \$34 million, and established an even higher goal—\$50 million—for the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, Major General Richard L. Irby leaves an enviable legacy of devoted, principled, and courageous service to the nation, the Commonwealth, and the Virginia Military Institute; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly note with sadness the loss of a distinguished military and academic leader, Major General Richard L. Irby; 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 Major General Richard L. Irby as an expression of the high regard in which his memory is held by the members of the General Assembly and the citizens of Virginia.

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