

## 2005 SESSION

ENROLLED

### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 678

*Commending the Huntington Park Beach Lifeguards and Dive Team.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 14, 2005

Agreed to by the Senate, January 20, 2005

WHEREAS, the highly trained professionals of the Huntington Park Beach Lifeguards and Dive Team of the City of Newport News are celebrated as heroes for their valiant efforts in a rescue on June 5, 2004; and

WHEREAS, on that day, a party of four adults and Darrell, a six-year-old boy, were enjoying a pleasant outing on the James River; and

WHEREAS, at five o'clock in the afternoon, the passengers of the 24 foot Welcraft cabin cruiser suddenly found themselves in a formidable storm, a driving current, and three to six foot waves; and

WHEREAS, at approximately 5:30 p.m. a mile-and-a-half from the shoreline of Newport News, the boat capsized; and

WHEREAS, thrown overboard, the adults were retrieved quickly from the water by a passing vessel; and

WHEREAS, amidst disorder and intense confusion, Darrell, last known to be asleep in the cabin of the boat, appeared to be lost; and

WHEREAS, as soon as the emergency call came into the Huntington Park Beach Lifeguard station, Captain Dan Jones and Sergeant Christine Bettenhausen launched the Lifeguard Rescue Zodiac (LRZ) equipped with rescue cans, snorkeling gear, throw bags and essential life support equipment; and

WHEREAS, Captain Jones immediately dispatched Lifeguard Scott Dow with binoculars and emergency equipment to the end of the James River Fishing Pier in order to maintain visual surveillance of the area and guide rescue watercraft to the capsized vessel; and

WHEREAS, the LRZ arrived on the scene at approximately 5:45 p.m. and joined the advance team of kayakers, Senior Lifeguard Philip Derosier and Lifeguard David Gourley; and

WHEREAS, the Newport News Fire Department Rescue, City Police, and Virginia Marine watercrafts simultaneously arrived, but there were no dive personnel aboard any of these vessels equipped to rescue the child trapped somewhere beneath the boat; and

WHEREAS, Captain Jones circled the capsized vessel, dropped Sergeant Bettenhausen nearby in the water, and donned snorkeling gear; and

WHEREAS, along with Derosier, Captain Jones and Bettenhausen dived continually for 35 minutes searching for Darrell in near zero visibility water conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Newport News Fire Department scuba dive team arrived at the site and also searched in vain for the boy; and

WHEREAS, Captain Jones then tied a towline from the bow of the Welcraft to the Virginia Marine Police boat, which towed the capsized craft to the shallow water of Leeward Marina where the rescuers further attempted to upright it without success; and

WHEREAS, at approximately 7 p.m., the United States Coast Guard Buoy Tender ship, equipped with a crane, was called to the scene to carefully hoist the vessel out of the water exposing the cabin and the child trapped in a small pocket of air; and

WHEREAS, two and one half hours after the accident, Darrell was recovered conscious and in good condition with the skill and tenacity of the lifeguards instrumental in the remarkable rescue; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Huntington Park Beach Lifeguards and Dive Team for their dedication to duty as well as their expedient and professional response to a dire life-threatening emergency; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Huntington Park Beach Lifeguards and Dive Team as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude for their heroic actions.

ENROLLED

HJ678ER