

2007 SESSION

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073884428

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 80

Offered February 22, 2007

Commending John Warren Cooke.

Patrons—Morgan, Callahan, Hall, Joannou, Johnson, Plum and Putney

WHEREAS, John Warren Cooke, an esteemed member of the House of Delegates for 38 years, served with great distinction as Speaker of the House for 12 years; and

WHEREAS, born and raised in Mathews County, John Warren Cooke attended the Virginia Military Institute and is the son of a Confederate veteran; his father, Giles B. Cooke, served on General Robert E. Lee's staff; and

WHEREAS, John Warren Cooke was first elected to the House of Delegates in 1941 at the young age of 26 to represent Mathews and Gloucester Counties; and

WHEREAS, Middlesex County was added to Delegate Cooke's district in 1944 and Charles City and New Kent Counties were added in 1965; the latter two counties were removed in 1971 when King and Queen, King William, and Essex counties were added; and

WHEREAS, John Warren Cooke began ascending the leadership ladder in the House of Delegates early in his legislative career; he was elected secretary of the Democratic caucus in 1944 and was named to the Privileges and Elections Committee; and

WHEREAS, John Warren Cooke was elected caucus chair in 1950, became majority floor leader in 1956, and was elected Speaker of the House in 1968; and

WHEREAS, John Warren Cooke conducted the business of the House of Delegates with decorum and impartiality; civility was his code and he always upheld the standards and traditions of parliamentary procedure; and

WHEREAS, known for his breadth of vision and sense of fairness, John Warren Cooke was the first Speaker to open major committees to members of the opposite party and to independents, and in 1968 he co-sponsored the enactment of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, during his almost four decades in the House of Delegates, John Warren Cooke served with integrity and humility and asserted a steadfast belief in the value of public investments in education, transportation, the environment, and mental health; and

WHEREAS, since retiring from the House of Delegates in 1979, John Warren Cooke has continued to be a strong presence in Mathews County, serving as president and publisher of Tidewater Newspapers, Inc., and as publisher of the weekly *Gloucester-Mathews Gazette-Journal*; and

WHEREAS, a friend, mentor, and advisor to many colleagues in government, John Warren Cooke has been dedicated to public service and has never wavered in his commitment to the people and institutions of the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That John Warren Cooke hereby be commended for his many years of exceptional leadership and outstanding service to the citizens of Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to John Warren Cooke as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration and gratitude for his wisdom, guidance, and commitment.

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