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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 514

Offered February 15, 2007

Celebrating the life of Lafayette Meekins, Jr.

Patron—Lambert

WHEREAS, Lafayette Meekins, Jr., was born in Richmond on January 2, 1924, and passed into eternity on January 27, 2007; and

WHEREAS, Lafayette Meekins, Jr., was educated in Richmond Public Schools and graduated from Armstrong High School in 1942; and

WHEREAS, Lafayette Meekins, Jr., loved horses and learned to ride at an early age while working on his family's farm, and in 1942, after volunteering for service in the United States Army, he reported to Fort Meade, Maryland, for training; and

WHEREAS, he was afforded an opportunity to use his love of horses and equestrian skills as a mounted infantry soldier in the United States 10th Cavalry Regiment, one of the all African American units formed on September 21, 1866, known as the "Buffalo Soldiers," which was deactivated in 1944 and reactivated in 1958; members of the regiment today wear the Buffalo symbol; and

WHEREAS, he was later assigned to Fort Riley, Kansas, and Camp Lockett, California, where as a member of the famous Buffalo Soldiers, he guarded the United States along the Mexican border, and loved riding his horse on his patrol in the pretty hills of California and along the streams through the forest near the shores of the Pacific Ocean; and

WHEREAS, Lafayette Meekins, Jr., served in the United States Army from February 1, 1942, to January 3, 1946, which included combat duty from February 3, 1944, to July 16, 1945, and after his honorable discharge, he worked at McGuire Veterans Hospital as a nursing assistant until his retirement in 1979; and

WHEREAS, Lafayette Meekins, Jr., served his country with distinction, earning recognition for his distinguished service and numerous medals, decorations, and citations, among them the coveted Combat Infantryman's Badge (CIB) for his warrior spirit and inspiration to others as a proud Buffalo Soldier, the American Theater Campaign Medal, Victory Medal, Asiatic Pacific Theater Campaign Medal with one Bronze Service Star, Philippine Liberation Campaign Medal with one Bronze Service Star, Eamet Campaign Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, and Good Conduct Medal AR 600-68, and recognition in 2004 for his outstanding service as a member of the United States Army during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Lafayette Meekins, Jr., was devoted to his family, church, and community, and was passionate about education, taking particular care to ensure that each of his five children received a college education; and

WHEREAS, his faith was an integral part of his life and as an active member of Good Shepherd Baptist Church, he served as a deacon, Sunday School teacher, member of the Senior and Men's Choirs, and the church building manager; managed the clothes closet for the needy; volunteered as the church bus driver for many years; and was a member of the church's hunt club with friends and family; and

WHEREAS, Lafayette Meekins, Jr., was an avid bowler, frequently participating in local and regional tournaments well into his eighties, and he loved classical music, fishing, watching the news, completing daily crossword puzzles in ink, engaging in a healthy discourse after a family dinner, playing Scrabble at family gatherings, where he was nearly unbeatable, and became computer literate in his mid-seventies, often spending hours each day on his computer; and

WHEREAS, Lafayette Meekins, Jr., shared his rich and abundant life with family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues who loved him dearly and cherish his memory; and

WHEREAS, Lafayette Meekins, Jr., leaves a legacy of service to God, family, country, and the Commonwealth worthy of emulation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Lafayette Meekins, Jr., a "Buffalo Soldier"; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Lafayette Meekins, Jr., as an expression of the esteem in which his memory and service to the nation and this Commonwealth are held by the members of the General Assembly.

INTRODUCED

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