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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 270

Offered January 23, 2008

Celebrating the life of Arthur M. Ratliff, Jr.

Patron—Bowling

WHEREAS, Arthur M. Ratliff, Jr., of Tazewell County, a respected citizen and greatly admired businessman and philanthropist, died October 31, 2007; and

WHEREAS, Arthur M. "Smiley" Ratliff, Jr., was born on June 18, 1924, the proud son of the late Arthur M. Ratliff, Sr., and Ida Woosley Ratliff and devoted brother to four sisters and two brothers; and

WHEREAS, well-known as a Renaissance man who possessed a photographic memory and an analytical mind, Arthur Ratliff was extremely proud of his humble beginnings in Southwest Virginia's Buchanan County; and

WHEREAS, Arthur Ratliff served his country in the United States Army and received 19 medals for his bravery during World War II and the Korean War, including the United Nations Service Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, two Purple Hearts, and a Bronze Star for capturing a machine gun nest in Korea; and

WHEREAS, a talented athlete in his youth, Arthur Ratliff was a great mentor of young people, and he helped organize the Hurley High School football program in 1951 and was a coach and teacher at the school for many years; and

WHEREAS, after leaving the Hurley football program, Arthur Ratliff entered the coal mining business in 1955; he founded the Miners and Merchants Bank of Grundy, the First Bank and Trust of Lebanon, and the Big Stone Gap Bank and Trust; and

WHEREAS, a brilliant and highly successful businessman, Arthur Ratliff invested in land and cattle and eventually operated the fifth largest cattle ranch in the nation becoming the largest individual land owner east of the Mississippi River; he was also a part owner of Tanglewood and Crossroads Malls in Roanoke; and

WHEREAS, a generous community benefactor, Arthur Ratliff aided many individuals and supported numerous civic organizations over the years, including Emory & Henry University where he was awarded an honorary doctoral degree; and

WHEREAS, always willing to lend a helping hand to citizens in need in the Tazewell community, Arthur Ratliff was a faithful member of the Springfield Christian Church and was supportive of the church's many missions at home and abroad; and

WHEREAS, Arthur Ratliff enjoyed traveling the world, which he did extensively—visiting every continent—but most of all he enjoyed his home in the beautiful green mountains and rolling hills of the Whitten Valley area of Tazewell County; and

WHEREAS, Arthur Ratliff will be fondly remembered as one of Southwest Virginia's best known and most colorful individuals and will be greatly missed by his two loving daughters, Cathy Gibson of Abingdon and Kim Bowman of Lebanon, and their wonderful families, especially his five beloved grandchildren; many other relatives, close friends, and admirers; and the citizens of Tazewell County and the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly mourn the passing of an outstanding Virginian, Arthur M. Ratliff, Jr.; 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 Arthur M. Ratliff, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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